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The Week

EUROPEAN international affairs were unusually obscure during the week ending January 19. Great Britain continued her efforts to persuade the other powers to follow her example and institute unilateral restrictions on "volunteers" for the Spanish Little World War. France obediently passed the necessary legislation but showed marked reluctance to put it into effect until she had some solid evidence that the fascist powers really intend to take the same course—which hardly anybody in the world expects. Soviet Russia refused any sort of unilateral restriction. Germany and Italy appeared to be delaying matters as much as possible in the hope of a decisive early victory by Franco at Madrid, although presumably recognizing that such a victory would be far from terminating the war. . . . From Rome, where Mussolini and Göring had long, secret conversations, came a fairly ridiculous trial balloon suggesting a revival of the four-power agreement of 1933. . . . France meanwhile started in hopefully to cajole the Germans with economic concessions on a large scale, trusting thereby to persuade Hitler to reduce armament in the expectation of subsequently getting back some of the lost German colonies—which would seem one of the dimmest hopes in history. . . . In the fighting in Spain, the rebels made a strong drive against the southern coast and managed to make some headway toward Malaga. . . . Europe's troubled conditions were reflected in a 35-percent increase in the military aspects of the Soviet government's budget. . . . Rumors were afloat in Washington and London that a new Anglo-American trade treaty may be negotiated soon. Some of the reports went farther and suggested a general economic conference in which France and some other countries might also participate.

THE strike of the General Motors employees overshadowed all other domestic news during the week. After long and strenuous efforts by Governor Frank Murphy, of Michigan, a fortnight's truce was declared during which discussions could take place. The union agreed that the sit-down strikes would end and the employers promised not to take advantage of that fact. Before there was time to get all the men out of the plants, the union charged General Motors with bad faith because the corporation promised to negotiate separately with the non-union workers in the Flint Alliance. Men who were "sitting down" in two Fisher Body plants in Flint thereupon refused to come out. . . . President Roosevelt during the week proposed an elaborate plan for reorganizing the federal government, discussed elsewhere in this issue. . . . The long continued quarrel over the electric-power policies of the TVA came closer to open conflict between two schools of thought within the organization; President Roosevelt appointed a special new committee on general power policy for the whole country, and there were fresh reports, once more firmly denied, of the impending resignation of Dr. Arthur E. Morgan, chief spokesman for a policy of coöperation with the private interests. . . . As the maritime strike came closer to its fourth month, the seamen were agitating for a change of the law to abolish continuous-discharge books which give employers an easy way of blacklisting union members. . . . Proceedings were opened in New York City against three more groups charged with racketeering: policy gamblers and individuals in the electric-supply and baking industries. . . . The perennial agitation for a Nicaraguan canal reappeared in Washington, as fresh and hopeful as ever.

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NEGOTIATIONS between the General Motors Corporation and the United Automobile Workers are at a complete standstill as we go to press. Each side charges the other with violation of the terms of the truce achieved in the early morning of January 15 by Governor Murphy of Michigan. The chronology of events shows clearly, however, that the first violations were committed by General Motors and that the action of the UAW was in response to these. The union promised to bring out the sit-down strikers, and was in the process of doing so, in various cities. Since the terms had to be explained to the men, and their consent obtained, this took some time. Before it was physically possible to complete the process, General Motors took several actions to which the union heads strongly objected. At one plant, a cordon of police was thrown around the building, with the announcement that picketing would be prohibited. At another, non-union workers were told to report for duty at once. Most important of all, in Flint a group of employees hostile to the union was notified in writing that it could bargain collectively with the Corporation at an early date. We take it for granted that the negotiations will soon begin again; the strike is costing General Motors too much, and giving competitors too great an advantage, to let it go on. The blunt underlying truth is that the General Motors Corporation is at heart anti-union and, despite its fair words, will do everything it can to maintain the conditions of the past.

PRESIDENT Roosevelt has acted with his usual political skill in appointing a new committee to outline a national policy in regard to the production of electric power in government-owned plants. Both the two chief spokesmen for opposing policies in the TVA, Dr. Arthur E. Morgan and David Lilienthal, are omitted from the committee. Headed by Secretary Ickes, it includes Robert E. Healy of the SEC, Frederick A. Delano of the National Resources Committee, Morris L. Cooke, Rural Electrification Administrator, and Frank R. McNinch, chairman of the Federal Power Commission. The main point with which the new committee must wrestle is, of course, whether the government should coöperate with the private utilities, even to the extent of pooling power with them, or should cling to its "yardstick" policy and if necessary itself distribute its own power. Dr. Morgan is in general in favor of the former policy, Mr. Lilienthal the latter. Among those in no friendly mood toward the private authorities is Senator Norris. Not only does he remember the misdeeds of the power trust which go back over many years (and have often been described in our pages), but he is bitter against the present policy of delaying through injunction proceedings efforts of the TVA to buy transmission lines, and during the interval continuing to make exorbitant profits from high rates. There is no guarantee, of course, that the President will accept the recommendation of his new committee; he has changed his mind before, and can do so again. His present mood is described as on the whole conciliatory toward the country's big business men. It will nevertheless be of great value to get the opinion of such an able group as has now been called together.

TWO measures for the reform of governmental procedure, both of them long cherished and championed by Senator Norris of Nebraska, were in actual operation during the week ending January 20. First, a President was inaugurated in conformity with the advantages of modern transportation (the Executive no longer has to ride horseback to Washington) and there was a newly elected rather than a "lame-duck" Congress already at work. Second, a unicameral legislature was functioning in Nebraska. The latter experiment offers more novelty than the lopping-off of long obvious anachronisms, and already several other states, notably Arkansas, are reported to be considering a single-body legislature for themselves. The Nebraska lawmakers now number forty-three, in contrast to the one hundred and fifty or more usually found in state legislatures. Committees are reduced in size as well as in number, and duplicate and joint committees are avoided. The absence of the chief theoretical advantage of the two-house legislature—the system of checks and balances—is compensated for in a number of ways. The provision that bills must be introduced five legislative days before a vote is taken assures ample time to register objections and prevents the passage of a measure on the spur of the moment, while the fact that each step in legislative procedure is now final, with no shifting of responsibility to another house, in itself tends to promote careful consideration of each bill presented. The time limit on sessions has been removed to reduce the jamming through of bills in the closing days of a session. Theoretically, the new system is undoubtedly a gain on the side of economy and legislative efficiency and it will be interesting to observe how it works in actual practice.

LAST week Joseph S. Gelders told the La Follette Senate subcommittee on civil liberties the story of his flogging in Birmingham, Alabama. He told how he had been followed, kidnaped and beaten, and how afterward he had picked two of his four assailants, Walter J. Hanna and Dent Williams, out of a police line-up, and later identified a third. The state police investigator assigned to the case, Sergeant James W. McClung, confirmed Gelders' story and said further that two of the three identified men were employed by the Tennessee Coal, Iron and Railroad Company, beside being officers of the National Guard. The TCI, McClung said, owns "about fifteen-sixteenths of Birmingham." Both Gelders and Sergeant McClung had one thing to report, the fact that two grand juries had refused to indict the floggers. The next day Yelverton Cowherd, who at the time of the flogging was chairman of the Americanization committee of the Birming-

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ham American Legion, told what he knew of Walter J. Hanna. He had paid bills of the committee in cash, said Cowherd, and he could always be reached at an office of the TCI. Several other witnesses identified Hanna as the man who threw away a club and some of Gelders' papers after the flogging. Grover Cleveland Giles, the chief of detectives of Birmingham, confirmed McClung's statements. We don't know whether he also endorsed McClung's reply to the question, "Do you think they should have been indicted?" but he might have very well. It was "Absolutely."

ADD to your list of old wives' tales the prevailing theory that tear gas is a harmless weapon to use in industrial disputes—or anywhere else, for that matter—which has only a temporary disabling effect upon the workers who are gassed. Health and Hygiene in its current issue, in an article called "Tear Gas—For Pickets," points out that such gas is a highly irritating and dangerous poison which can easily cause serious burns and permanent blindness. Moreover, these burns are of a type that requires expert and immediate treatment at the hands of a physician; treatment of a sort, it is fair to assume, the victim is unlikely to obtain. The idea that tear gas is a pleasant and playful way of putting a striker out of commission has not simply grown up out of thin air. It has been carefully nurtured by the manufacturers of tear-gas guns and bombs in an advertising campaign in the press. The copy runs along something like this: "Plant Owners! Are there signs of trouble in your shop? Are your workers grumbling and fretting? Why not act now, before it is too late, and equip your plant with a supply of tear gas (in convenient gun and bomb form) so that you may avoid trouble later on? Tear gas is completely safe, harmless and effective. Write now for our attractive illustrated folder." In a way the false rumor of harmlessness which has been attached to tear gas is like the aura that surrounded the homely general remedy the European fascists have for people they don't like: namely, dosing them with a quart of castor oil. It sounded like such a hygienic punishment until you discovered that it was a fatal one.

TWO large gifts by millionaires have lately raised once more the question of effective use of vast fortunes at or near the close of the lives of their owners. Mr. Andrew Mellon has presented to the federal government his collection of paintings, and will erect a gallery to house them; the nominal value of the gift is something like $28,000,000, and the collection of old masters may actually be worth twice that sum. The late Charles Hayden of New York has donated nearly all his fortune of some $50,000,000 for a foundation to educate and advance American youth morally, mentally and physically. It is certainly better that great fortunes should be returned to public use in this way than that they should be passed on in bulk to the children of the owner, of whom a remarkably large percentage, taking the country as a whole, seem to make little effective use of their funds. But while this is so, it is hard to work up any enthusiasm over the real merit of such gifts as Mellon and Hayden have just made. A great art gallery is of course of tremendous value; America already has several, and most of the leading countries of the world have created them as state enterprises. Mr. Mellon could have done far better if instead of buying old masters he had spent his money, for example, to encourage and develop native American art now and in the future. As for the Hayden foundation, we gravely doubt whether any way will be found to use it effectively. The standard history of such gifts is that in a few years' time changing conditions make them obsolete, while the trustees are hampered by rigid restrictions. If these are the best uses to which vast fortunes can be put, it might be better not to permit such accumulations at all.

RECENT labor news: As the national maritime strike went on, officials of the Masters, Mates and Pilots of America and the National Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association called off the strike of those two unions in East Coast ports on January 14. They had previously settled with several steamship companies. On January 18 1,200 striking seamen demonstrated in Washington, D. C. They sent a delegation to Secretary of Labor Perkins and Secretary of Commerce Roper to protest continuous-discharge books, now required, and to endorse the Sirovich resolution for suspending use of the books for six months. The National Labor Relations Board announced it would hold a hearing on the contract between shipping companies and the International Seamen's Union, a contract that the strikers have always contended is illegal, since the officials who signed it were instructed by the membership not to sign on such terms. . . . Eight thousand workers in Philadelphia's 150 dress and blouse factories received general strike orders and prepared to walk out about January 20, the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union announced. They are demanding a 20-percent wage increase, hourly minimums, the ending of discrimination and extension of union conditions to shops doing contract work. . . . The 150 employees of the Indiana Railroad in Terre Haute struck January 17 for a 20-percent wage increase, tying up the city's streetcar and bus lines completely. . . . Strikers at the Berkshire Knitting Mills of Reading, Pennsylvania, where 6,500 have been out for three and a half months, asked the La Follette Senate subcommittee on civil liberties to investigate attacks on strikers. The company refuses to negotiate in any way with the union. . . . More than 1,700 members of the United Textile Workers of America in the Shuster Hayward Mills at Franklin, Millbury, East Douglas and Manchaug, Massachusetts, have been on strike for more than a month to get 100-percent union organization.

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The Menace of Prosperity

PEOPLE have been accustomed to depression for so many years that it is scarcely realized that business recovery is here. For many months the upward tendencies of the statistical indices have been gathering momentum, until at last the average of industrial production has forged above the 1929 level. Automobile output is preparing to break precedents; steel capacity is practically occupied. Textiles have just enjoyed one of the most prosperous years of their history. We are moving into the stage where new factories will have to be built and new machinery manufactured to satisfy the prospective demand. The central banking authorities are now chiefly concerned, not with stimulating recovery, but with preventing it from shooting up into an inflationary boom.

Most persons have perhaps been slow to admit that recovery has gone so far, because of certain prominent defects in the growth of a new prosperity. There is still a lot of unemployment. The federal budget is not yet balanced, chiefly because relief remains an onerous necessity. Real estate and building, the activity of which we ordinarily associate with prosperous times, are not yet nearly back to normal. The railroads, one of our greatest single industries, have only recently experienced sufficiently expanded traffic to lead them to make up for deferred maintenance, to say nothing of new additions to equipment. It is traditional to say that we cannot have prosperity without active building and a flood of railroad orders. But no revival ever stimulates all industries equally and simultaneously, and none exactly repeats the processes of its predecessors. The fact remains that steel did not this time need orders from builders and railroads, because so many new uses for its products have been discovered. Statistics of recovery, in their broad averages, always cover many unsatisfactory special cases.

It is true, of course, that production will have to rise far above 1929 levels before we have anything that can be called prosperity. In the intervening seven years the population has naturally grown, and more would have to be turned out in order to have the same output per capita. Industrial efficiency has grown too, so that a good deal more can be produced per worker. The normal expectation would therefore be that full production this time will be considerably greater than anything the country has hitherto experienced; certainly this must be the case if unemployment is to shrink to anything like normal proportions.

The building industry has had to go through a long and painful liquidation; it is coming back now, and the prospect is that in due course there will develop another building boom. The industry is so disorganized and so heavy with vested interests of all sorts that it is never able to see far before its nose or to act in such a way as to promote rather than to disturb stability. There is of course always a housing shortage of dwellings adequate in standard for persons in the lower brackets, but to this there has rapidly been added a shortage of space even for those who are able to pay rentals sufficient to stimulate the speculative builders. Rents are climbing rapidly in the cities, and we shall undoubtedly have complaints like those in 1920 before building catches up with the demand. All this might have been foreseen, and building might have taken advantage of the low costs of depression to prepare for the necessities of the future, if the industry and those who finance it were even reasonably well adapted to fulfill their function efficiently. There is always a considerable lag, however, and the actual, though hitherto concealed, shortage of living space has accumulated so long that residence building is very likely, not only to recover rapidly, but considerably to overshoot the mark. This will mean a new stimulus to revival during the next year or two, to be followed in all probability by a speculative overexpansion similar to that in the last boom. In the meantime, of course, the unemployment situation will be considerably relieved in this quarter.

Railroad buying is also likely to rebound from the extremely low levels of the recent past, when shortsighted policies which kept rates high and delayed necessary deflation of capital structures prevented the spending which ought to have taken place in depression. This spending will now accelerate recovery and will strain already overtaxed facilities of the industries making materials. The temporary effect will help in the restoration of prosperity; we shall be more lucky than we deserve if it does not lead to shortages, price boosting and the usual overexpansion.

Our financial mentors are running true to form in dreading credit inflation and an unhealthy boom in the early stages. They did so also in 1923, and applied what seemed to them corrective measures at that time. But when prosperity really flowers, such early misgivings are likely to be forgotten. The banks have unprecedented reserves and can issue enormously enlarged amounts of credit. How long will the Federal Reserve Board, even with its new legal powers, be able or even willing to prevent them from doing so when the new boom really takes hold of American hopes and imaginations?

We are not so rash as to believe that a continuous and unbroken rise of business fortune will occur during the next few years; there have always been minor recessions in the course of such a rise, and doubtless there will be again. But it looks as if the stage were set for another period in which one force after another would come into play to make us believe, as we did in the last new era, that nothing can stop the onrush of prosperity. Gradually doubts will give way to confidence, and confidence to recklessness. What important change has been made in the economic order to forestall the menace of prosperity, prosperity menacing because of its inevitable nemesis? We regretfully report that we do not see any.

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New Tools for Uncle Sam

THE PLAN for reorganizing the federal government, submitted by President Roosevelt to Congress a few days ago, is a counsel of perfection, as the President and his advisers are doubtless aware. No one seems to have much hope that it will ever be adopted in toto, and even to carry out any substantial part of it will be the work of years. We shall discuss the important proposals separately and in detail as they come before Congress for serious consideration. For the present, it is sufficient merely to indicate the general direction and value of each of the major parts of the scheme.

That the governmental machinery needs revision everyone knows who has the slightest contact with its workings. The New Republic has been urging such revision from the earliest days of this paper. There is substantial waste and inefficiency through overlapping of departments and duplication of function. Even more important are the needed tasks which at present go by default. It is necessary, however, that the public be warned not to expect substantial reduction in government expense as a result of reorganization. Some economies are certainly possible, but in most cases they will not be large. A given amount of work costs about the same even if the bureau in which it is done is called something else and is placed in a new grouping. The real value of reorganization is heightened efficiency.

The proposals to add two new departments, of Social Welfare and Public Works, and to change the name of the Department of the Interior to the Department of Conservation, have apparently met with general approval. Each of the two added subjects is of sufficient importance to merit a department and representation in the Cabinet. Many persons believe that modern warfare has made technological advance of a sort that renders artificial the division between the War and Navy Departments, and that they might better be grouped into a single Department of National Defense; no doubt this suggestion will be explored by Congress when the matter is up for consideration.

The plan for a group of assistants to the President to take some of the intolerable burden of detail from his shoulders seems an obvious piece of good sense that should have been put into effect long ago. (For the sake of the record: the first public advocacy of such a proposal, so far as we can learn, was made in an article in The New Republic, "Washington Revisited," in our issue of March 13, 1935.) To find the men with the necessary qualifications, who are at the same time willing to undertake this sort of anonymous, responsible work, will be difficult but not impossible.

The proposal for a centralized publicity and information service is one that should not be adopted without the most careful consideration. All the fascist countries have such bureaus and they invariably turn out to have censorship, the suppression of needed facts, as their chief function. We cannot imagine that any such scheme would work in this country, even if it were tried: in every department, men would be found who were willing to give to journalists, anonymously, the information that the central bureau was seeking to withhold. Whether it would work or not, we hope it will not be attempted. However annoying it may be to government officials to have their dirty linen aired in public, the national health is safeguarded thereby.

The proposal to put the entire government personnel under civil service, except a few of the highest policy-making posts, is courageous enough to inspire admiration for the courage of the President and his advisers. American politics is founded on patronage, and the Democratic and Republican Parties are both equally guilty. It is hard to believe that anything short of a revolution in public opinion will compel Congress to adopt such a far-reaching reform and self-denying ordinance. That every serious student of government will favor the proposal goes without saying. At the same time, universal extension of the civil service is only one step toward solving the problem of efficient and intelligent administration. Incompetent and dishonest bureaucracy is a serious menace in this as in every other country. What is needed beyond everything else is a higher quality of men coming into the public service. It is far less important that these men should be trained experts in any specific field of government activity than that they should be good human material, intelligent and zealous for the public welfare.

The President's proposals for new powers for the Director of the Budget, for a planning board to operate in the field of long-range policies and for clipping the wings of the Controller General all look in the right direction. Even the Tories now concede the necessity of some degree of national planning and of a sound budget system. Almost everyone recognizes that steps should be taken to prevent political activity under the guise of auditing by the Controller General.

The presidential proposal about which the gravest misgivings will be felt is the plan to incorporate such independent bodies as the Federal Trade Commission, Interstate Commerce Commission, Federal Power Commission, etc., into one or another of the departments represented in the Cabinet. While it is true that these boards have some executive functions, they are also to a large degree judicial in character. It is of the highest importance that they should be kept free from political pressure from either the President or anybody else. The present system of appointment to these boards would seem to give ample check on the quality of their personnel. It would be a tragedy if they became mere appendages of the temporary occupant of the White House.

The President has been advised (not that he needs any tutelage in practical politics) that the chance of putting through his plan will be enhanced if all these proposals are embodied in one omnibus

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measure. This is probably true, but we hope the advice will not be taken. Mr. Roosevelt has enormous majorities in both Houses. There is no likelihood of substantial resistance to any suggestion of his unless that suggestion is one filled with obvious and important flaws. The various parts of this plan are sufficiently important to deserve individual and careful consideration. The country has a right to be heard from in regard to all of them.

It is almost equally important that the reorganization plan should not take precedence over other serious matters now awaiting congressional action. We have blundered along for generations with the existing federal machinery and a few additional weeks or months will do no irreparable harm. Meanwhile, we badly need revision of our relief policy, and additional appropriations to prevent the danger of starvation among the unemployed. We need a rewriting of the neutrality law to reduce the likelihood of our being drawn into the European war that daily seems to come nearer. The Social Security Act is in great need of revision, as Mr. Abraham Epstein points out in this issue of The New Republic, and every passing day makes that revision more complicated and difficult. Government reorganization is desirable, but to jam it through now might cost a price we should regret for generations.

The British Electricity Grid

MANY PERSONS are urging that governmental bodies such as the TVA, and private power companies, instead of engaging in costly competition with each other, should work out some kind of joint distribution system. This was the central topic at the recent White House power conference and it seems likely that there will be increasing future agitation for some such plan. In view of this, it is interesting to note the experience of Great Britain in this field. Ten years ago the British government set up the supervising and policy-making Electricity Commission, and authorized under it a constructing and operating body, the Central Electricity Board. The latter body was not a governmental agency, although it served a quasi-public function. With funds partly borrowed from the government and partly obtained by the sale of (non-voting) stock to the public, the Central Electricity Board began the construction of a physical distribution system of towers and transmission lines which by the time of its completion in 1933 covered virtually the whole of Great Britain. Governmental action thus enabled the numerous public (mostly municipal) and private power companies to do what they hadn't been able to do by themselves—set up a central coördinating system. This system, popularly known as the Grid, buys all the electricity generated in the country, puts it upon the circulating medium and then resells it to the distributing systems, which remain in their original hands and under their original control. There are several hundred of these distributing systems and they set their own prices in distributing current to the consumer. On the whole the system has worked remarkably well in reducing rates, standardizing apparatus and voltages, and extending service to areas not hitherto supplied. Evidence of this is the remarkable fact that new consumers are being connected at the rate of more than 850,000 per year.

The system is not perfect, however. On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the authorization of the Grid, the English research group PEP (Political and Economic Planning) has issued an exhaustive and authoritative study of its workings. The chief difficulty arises from the multiplicity of individual undertakings, both public and private, that feed into and buy from the Grid. This results in wide discrepancies in the rates charged the consumers, depending upon what particular system serves a given area, and in wide variations in efficiency as between one undertaking and another. PEP, however, warns against the popular proposal to achieve greater uniformity by having the larger units absorb the smaller and says that mere size is not necessarily a guarantee of efficiency. The PEP report recommends that holding companies, which are not themselves actually in the business of selling electricity and thus are hard to reach under existing legislation but which do buy up and combine the stock of operating companies, be made more definitely subject to public control. The report also recommends the appointment of a Committee of Investigation to make specific engineering recommendations for efficiency of specific plants and systems; the giving of increased powers to the Electricity Commission to regulate tariffs; the unification of all existing legislation and the setting up of a new Electrical Development Authority to carry out research and development work on a national scale. The British experience, no matter how successful it might be, is not necessarily a guide for the United States in the present situation, since municipal operation is there far more common, and regulation has an entirely different history.

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The Future of Social Security

Needed Amendments in the Present Law

This is the eighth in the series of articles on various aspects of the next four years of American life. Additional contributors will be Harry L. Hopkins on "The Next Four Years in Unemployment and Relief," Bruce Bliven on "The Next Four Years in Foreign Affairs," and George Soule, "The Next Four Years—A Summary."—THE EDITORS.

REVERSING a generation of condemnation and taboo, the American people now fancy social insurance as a cure-all for their economic ills. This radical change in the American attitude is not surprising. Censorious of new ideas in prosperous times, we have been first to pursue social and economic utopias in periods of distress. The years of depression with their terrors of insecurity made the promise of "social security" a symbol of new hope, self-preservation and freedom from poverty and sorrow. Hailed at its passage as ushering in a new social order—an era of security—faith in the Social Security Act as a harbinger of immediate and complete security was unshaken by the bitter Republican campaign and has been strengthened since the election by the publicity build-up for the recent colossal registration system.

Social insurance does offer the best known means for the alleviation of the major economic ills resulting from our present industrial order. But though in operation in scores of nations for many years, it has never brought utopia to any country. Its mechanism is limited to the major problems of industrial workers—accidents, sickness, invalidity, old age, unemployment, widowhood and orphanage. Even these it can meet only to a limited, not a full extent. Its technique cannot be readily adjusted to the problems of insecurity confronting such large sectors of the population as the farmers, the business men, the professional classes and the self-employed.

Of the many comprehensive social-insurance systems abroad the British plan has proved most successful. This is due chiefly to the fact that from the start it stressed the *social* rather than the *insurance* phase of the problem. Instead of following the principles of private insurance, the English aimed primarily to guarantee a modest basic income for all workers in need. Rejecting high contributions from workers and their employers to build reserves for the future—which reduce immediate purchasing power—the British government sought to augment the purchasing power of the masses by distributing the security costs among all classes of the population. Through this wise use of social insurance Britain not only maintained wage rates but kept its index of unemployment at a lower level than any other nation throughout its prolonged depression. It was also enabled to emerge from the depression earlier and on a sounder basis than any other country, with the national economy in better balance.

The insurance provisions of our Social Security Act have little in common with the English program. First, the British system covers practically all the industrial emergencies. The Social Security Act confines itself mainly to only two of the major risks—old age and unemployment—with some provision for the needy orphans and blind. The grave problem of sickness, which in normal times constitutes the chief cause of poverty, is not touched. Second, instead of distributing the insurance costs among all elements of society, the Act places the burden entirely upon the wage-earners and consumers of the nation. Its insurance provisions actually relieve the wealthy from their share of the social burden which, through the poor laws, they have helped to carry for over 300 years. Its regressive payroll taxes merely oblige the poor to share their poverty in order to sustain the impoverished, thereby aggravating the existing maldistribution of income. Moreover, the heavy direct withdrawals from workers' wages and the taxes on employer payrolls—which will be passed on to workers as consumers in the form of increased prices—can only tend to reduce further the present inadequate purchasing power. The wage taxes may also intensify employers' efforts to install labor-saving machinery in order to reduce payrolls.

Because the payroll and wage taxes cannot supply sufficient revenue, the Act establishes scant security. It not only ignores the problem of the 10,000,000 unemployed, but offers little protection to the future unemployed as well as to the aged for a generation to come. Under the existing laws only a few of the future unemployed will be able to obtain $15 a week for more than ten weeks. For the next twenty years at least, most aged workers will be fortunate to draw a pension of $20 or $25 a month. An insured worker must earn $100 per month uninterruptedly for twenty years and retire from all work before he can get a pension of $32.50 per month. Not a penny is provided for his wife if he lives. Few men or women working today will live to receive the maximum pension of $85 monthly, attainable only by those who earn $3,000 every single year for forty-three years.

Embodying ten good, bad and indifferent measures of insurance and relief, based on three different philosophies of governmental operation, the Social Security Act is frequently referred to as the Social Obscurity Act. Its omnibus character, its delay in

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benefit payments, its inconsistencies in coverage and its general unwieldiness have postponed the sad day when the American people will realize that it cannot provide them subsistence in their old age or unemployment; that it does not solve their problems of insecurity. Such disillusionment must be avoided. Congress must alter the present act before the expectations of our people are dashed and a setback given to the entire movement for social insurance.

The major changes and amendments necessary can best be discussed briefly with reference to each of the three divisions of the act: (1) the grant-in-aid systems for the relief of the destitute aged, the destitute blind, the dependent children and other welfare phases; (2) the national old-age-insurance plan; (3) the tax-credit system for unemployment insurance.

1. Since the relief programs in the act are financed through general taxation and follow the traditionally effective device of federal aid to states, they are genuinely constructive and need no changes in principle. They are definitely in the direction of greater security. Every penny given these needy persons adds to their consuming power and helps, to that extent, to bring a better adjustment of the national income. The changes necessary here are merely those relating to the adequacy and standards of the present provisions.

The federal act allows each state an amount equal to one-half of the sums expended for old-age assistance to persons sixty-five years of age and over, "not counting so much of such expenditure with respect to any individual for any month as exceeds $30." This provision raises two difficulties: (1) Since the federal government refuses to share with a state that part of any individual allowance which exceeds $30, states are reluctant to make higher grants despite their needs and ability to do so. New York, for example, hesitates to grant a larger number of pensions above $30 a month since it alone must finance the additional costs. (2) In limiting the federal share to one-half of each pension paid by a state, up to a maximum of $15 monthly, the poorer states, unable to match the full $15, prefer to forgo some of the federal money and grant extremely meager pensions. In fourteen states, for instance, the average pension is under $15 a month, which is obviously not enough to live on and too much to die on.

Both difficulties can be easily remedied. By making the federal share equal to one-half of the amount expended by a state not to exceed a state *average* of $30 a month, the first difficulty would be overcome. Since even in New York State, where 27 percent of the New York City grants in 1935 were over $30 a month, the monthly average that year was only about $21, it can readily be seen that by raising the state average to $30 per month many higher grants would be possible without an increase in the present federal limit of $15. The wealthier states would thus be enabled to raise the level of pensions considerably and make the allowances more adequate. A state average of $30 a month would make possible many $40 and $50 pensions, thus meeting the problem of the needy aged fairly adequately.

The second difficulty can be overcome by making the federal $15 grant represent two-thirds instead of one-half of the state allowance. An average contribution of only $7.50 by a poor state would thus make possible many grants of $25 and over per month in that state. The level in the poor states would thus be considerably raised, while the wealthier states would have no inducement to reduce their present grants since they would not be losing anything. At the same time, the federal government would not be required to increase its present $15 limit. The problem of migratory workers could be overcome by requiring the states to reduce their residence requirements.

The same changes should be made in the subsidies for the needy blind, which are granted on an identical basis. They also apply to the grants for dependent children with one further addition: The federal grant to dependent children is now limited to only one-third of the state allowance. Obviously, there is no reason why needy mothers and children should not be entitled to the same federal share as the needy aged and blind.

2. Whereas the problems raised by the relief features in the act can be met by a few simple changes, the insurance features require more deep-rooted amendments. Here changes are necessary in basic philosophy as well as in structure. The essential changes become apparent if we bear in mind the objectives of social-security legislation. As implied in the very title of the act, these objectives are to provide security against want in old age and unemployment in a social manner.

The main defects in the old-age-insurance phase of the act arise from the federal government's desire, contrary to all experience abroad, to establish a system of compulsory old-age insurance in order to escape all governmental responsibility for the accumulated problem of old-age indigency. As a result, it is forced to build up huge reserves which will amount to $47,000,000,000 in 1980. To be able to relieve itself of its state subsidies within a short time as well as build reserves, the contributions had to be made extremely high. But since they could not be set high enough to accomplish this double purpose adequately, the government preferred to sacrifice the older workers. Its old-age-security scheme, therefore, does not secure the aged.

Unable, however, to deny the older workers any pensions at all, the government guarantees at least a minimum pension of $10 monthly in 1942 to all those who have been insured for five years, have reached sixty-five and have received at least $2,000 in wages, even though none will have earned such an annuity. But since the unearned annuities must be drawn solely from the payroll and wage taxes, the government placed this extra load upon the shoul-

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ders of the younger workers, especially the better paid ones. Thus, under the act, the higher paid younger workers entering the system in 1949, when the six-percent rate goes into effect, will, together with their employers, pay a premium rate considerably higher than a private insurance company would charge for the same annuities. For example, a worker of twenty, entering the system in 1949, and earning $200 monthly, could, with his employer, purchase a private annuity of $117.88 monthly. His monthly pension under the federal plan will be $76.25. A young man earning $250 a month could, under similar conditions, obtain a private annuity of $147.35 a month as compared with a federal annuity of $85. The argument that the federal annuities are larger than private annuities bought by workers' own contributions is meaningless, since workers eventually bear the employers' taxes either in decreased wages or higher prices.

Obviously, no government can shift the cost of the accumulated burden of old-age dependency to the younger workers without incalculable social harm. The tax is levied on earnings, not incomes. Younger persons striving to raise families need every dollar they earn. The United States, like all other countries, must realize that this burden can be carried only as a community responsibility, shared equitably by all classes of the population. Provision for the older group can be made only through an adequate system of non-contributory pensions or by government supplements to the old-age-insurance system. Fortunately, the changes necessary can be effected by amendments, without scrapping the present plan, in the following ways:

First, the present payroll tax of one percent on workers and employers can be retained. Instead of the present one-half-percent tax increase every three years, the increase should occur every five or even ten years as in England. The maximum rate should not be applied for twenty or even forty years, and should never exceed four percent, instead of the present six percent reached in twelve years. These changes would eliminate most of the social dangers contained in the present scheme: (a) The lowered contribution rates will not prove so burdensome upon industry and the workers; (b) they will not reduce purchasing power to so large a degree; (c) they will not prove so serious a factor in increasing unemployment through technological developments; and (d) they will remove the dangers of large reserve accumulations and place the program on a more or less pay-as-you-go basis.

Second, to meet the needs of those soon to reach sixty-five years of age, either one of the two following methods can be used: (a) For a number of years the older group can be cared for through the existing non-contributory state pensions by increasing, if necessary, the present federal subsidy for this purpose and requiring better state standards. The needy insured would be compensated for their thrift by not considering their accumulated annuities as assets under the non-contributory pensions, thus assuring them a larger income compared to those who have not been insured. Those not in need would receive only the annuities they earned. Since, under the present plan, the state pension systems will have to supplement the needy insured for almost a generation to come, the suggested plan would at least eliminate the necessity of making younger workers pay the extra costs. (b) Another way of accomplishing the same purpose is to follow the British system. The government may guarantee an old-age annuity of say $30 or $35 monthly to all insured persons as well as their wives by 1940 or 1942, thus establishing a minimum of security in old age. The government deficit incurred would be made up from current progressive taxation or by borrowing if necessary. Much of this money would represent savings in lowered subsidies to the state pension systems and reduced administrative costs. The government burden, heaviest in the first years, would gradually taper off as the contributions of workers and employers increased sufficiently to provide an adequate annuity. This plan would also eliminate the huge reserves. By increasing the purchasing power of the masses and bringing about a better balance in the national income, it would meet the chief objectives of this program.

3. While the sound national administration of the old-age-insurance plan enables the attainment of its social objectives without altering its basic structure, much greater difficulty is encountered in reconstructing the present cumbersome tax-credit plan for unemployment insurance, which, from the start, was opposed by every student of the problem. This plan suffers not only from the same anti-social concepts found in the old-age-insurance program but, in addition, employs such a topheavy administrative mechanism that improvement through mere amendment is impossible. Like the old-age-insurance plan, it cannot achieve its objectives—to provide protection for the unemployed and enhance the security of the nation. It offers little security for the unemployed because: (a) It completely ignores the huge basin of existing unemployed; (b) it fails to provide benefits after the short insurance period has been passed; (c) it fails to consider the dependents of the insured.

Moreover, unlike the unified national old-age-insurance plan, the unemployment-insurance system requires the creation of forty-eight additional state tax systems and duplicating bookkeeping systems for employers. Discouraging uniformity, it frustrates any hope of establishing an adequate system of unemployment insurance throughout the United States. It permits of all kinds of state systems regardless of their efficacy. At best, it can bring only a miscellany of forty-eight divergent state plans creating endless confusion, great inequality among states as well as among workers and employers in the states, and bad feeling on the part of the unemployed. To remedy the above defects it is necessary to recast the administrative

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structure and to reconsider both the present relief program and the unemployment-insurance plan.

First, though it may be unwise to change the present federal-state line-up in unemployment insurance, the cumbersome and unnecessary duplicating taxes and bookkeeping must not be perpetuated. Students of the subject are practically unanimous that the best means of providing unemployment insurance under a coöperative federal-state plan is by federal subsidies to states which enact laws conforming to adequate federal standards. The subsidy for the regular state insurance benefits should be either an amount equal to the federal tax collected within the state or the amount needed by the state for insurance benefits during a specified period of, say, not less than twenty weeks. Thus, the states would not have to levy taxes of their own and only the single federal tax would be retained, which might even be augmented by a levy not to exceed one percent on workers, justified for psychological reasons. The advantages of this simple subsidy plan over the present cumbersome tax-offset system are obvious: (a) It would assure a uniform system of unemployment insurance throughout the country; (b) it would provide an effective method of meeting the needs of the unemployed during the insurance-benefit period; (c) it would eliminate the necessity of forty-nine separate tax systems.

Second, while the subsidy plan would obviate the costly and duplicating tax and bookkeeping systems, it would still make no provision for the present unemployed and those suffering from prolonged unemployment in the future. To accomplish this purpose it is necessary to remodel our relief program—a task that can hardly be further postponed. No longer an emergency problem, relief for the unemployed is a national question that cannot be relegated to the states. Mr. Roosevelt did not repeat in his last campaign the assertion made a few years ago that "I stand or fall by my refusal to accept as a necessary condition of our future a permanent army of the unemployed." According to Mr. Hopkins, even if 1929 conditions return we shall probably continue to have from 6,500,000 to 7,500,000 unemployed. This huge problem cannot be met through WPA. Already every effort is being made to reduce the WPA rolls and few persons believe that we can provide constructive work relief for millions of unemployed indefinitely. Aside from the expense involved, it is dubious wisdom to use a work-relief system that helps to undermine wage scales and conceal governmental administrative costs. To the limit possible, worth-while governmental projects should, of course, be used to give work to the unemployed at normal wages.

The balance of the existing needy unemployed should be taken care of through the employment exchanges operating in conjunction with the unemployment-insurance system, as in England. Under this plan, those now on relief would register and report for work daily at the public employment exchanges. Whenever a job at normal wages is available within his occupation, the unemployed would have to accept it or lose his benefits. So long as jobs are unavailable, or when they end, the unemployed would be entitled to benefits on the same basis as those in the regular insurance plan. This system would have many beneficial results: (a) It would effectively eliminate the slackers; (b) it would provide the best and cheapest method of checking the unemployed; (c) it would make possible the acceptance of temporary jobs now shunned by persons on relief because of the difficulty of returning to the relief rolls; (d) it would provide for the unemployed on a dignified basis; and (e) it would actually prove considerably cheaper than the present expenditures on WPA and local relief. While this program seems revolutionary, England has practised it with the greatest success and at less expense.

There are, of course, the claims of the psychological superiority of work relief. These are greatly exaggerated, however. What embitters relief recipients today is the uncertainty and stigma of relief. When granted on a dignified and assured basis through the employment exchanges, relief becomes as self-respecting as unemployment-insurance benefits. The long needy unemployed worker in Great Britain receives his benefits on the same basis and in the same pay queue as his recently employed brother. Moreover, systematic relief can bring no harm to the short-time unemployed. A six months' or even a year's lay-off for a worker with assurances of some self-respecting income is not a social calamity *per se*. For the long-time unemployed a more vitalizing program than "made work" is essential for morale. Measures for retraining and vocational guidance would have to be added.

A serious handicap to both old-age and unemployment-insurance administration at present is the setting of contributions and benefit rates as a percentage of wages earned. Both our insurance systems go out of their way to set up the most complicated administration by making every wage-earner a separate wage class. The costs of this administration may, in many instances, exceed the contributions. Great Britain has always used flat rates for this purpose because the stamp system it makes possible minimizes the difficulties and costs of administration. Other countries divide the workers into wage classes and set a flat rate within each class. Our difficulty can be overcome by the establishment of simple definite rates of contributions and benefits, differentiated by age and sex as in England, or by wage groups as in other countries.

Since the success of social insurance depends entirely on the sound principles embodied in the laws and on careful and intelligent administration, it is imperative that Congress at once alter the basic structure of the Social Security Act. Otherwise the present program, by shattering the hopes of a distressed people, may help to lead us away from the peaceful road of social legislation in coping with the Gargantuan problems of insecurity.

ABRAHAM EPSTEIN.

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Sitting Down in Flint

THE SIT-DOWN strike is the most important development in the technique of labor disputes in a generation; the strike of the United Automobile Workers against the General Motors Corporation is probably the most significant struggle in American industry since the War. For these among other reasons I came to Flint, heart of the storm, to have a look at what is happening.

To get inside a plant while a sit-down is in progress is a hard job. On the day I entered Fisher Body Number One, the strikers had been holding the fort for two weeks. In that time not a soul had entered the building without their consent, and very few under any circumstances. When our car pulled up at the curb before the big, modern structure, set back in a green lawn like a Middle Western high school, a reception committee of five or six sturdy men was waiting. They promptly searched our party, and the car, for weapons. Only when they had been reassured as to our identity were we allowed to go up the walk to the plant itself. All the doors had been shut and heavily barricaded, two weeks earlier. To get in, you climbed on a pile of packing boxes, and swung yourself over the lower third of a heavy window of steel and opaque glass, hinged horizontally at the top. On a platform just inside was another reception committee, friendly enough on the surface but with grim undertones in their voices as they checked over our credentials. During the whole period of the sit-down, nobody left or entered the plant without a pass, and without being searched on his way out and in.

The room in which we found ourselves was a vast oblong, used for building automobile bodies. A double line of these extended the length of the plant, close together, looking with their uniform gray color and their smooth and bulging contours a little like so many kneeling elephants, trunk to tail. As you went forward along the line, each of these bodies was a trifle closer to completion than the one behind it; those at the very end even had the colors they will bear when chassis, engine and wheels have been added and they are off to the road.

Fifteen hundred men had lived for two weeks in a building never intended to be lived in at all, yet the place was remarkably neat and tidy, at least as clean as it is under normal conditions. Beds were made up on the floor of each car, the seats being removed if necessary, and the members of the night shift of guards were sound asleep in the haphazard quarters. They had no weapons of any kind except braided leather billies improvised inside the plant after the sit-down had started. The guards off duty slept in their clothes, with these billies thrust into a pocket or, sometimes, loosely grasped in the sleeper's hand.

The degree of organization among these men was something to think about. An elected strike committee was in general control. Every man had specified duties, to be performed at specified hours. Meals were prepared with food brought by friends on the outside and passed in through a window, these meals being served in the plant cafeteria at stipulated hours. A barber shop was in operation in one of the rest rooms. Liquor was absolutely forbidden. An emergency post office was set up and there was a heavy movement of mail in both directions—all of it censored by a special committee.

For recreation, the men played cards or listened to the radio, or to a daily concert by the members of the workmen's band, who were staying in. Hundreds of friends and relatives of the strikers visited them every day. With characteristic Yankee ingenuity, the strikers had rigged up a loud-speaker system throughout the plant, with a microphone at the "main entrance." When a visitor called to see any given striker, he was paged over the loud-speaker system. When meetings of all the strikers (except the guards on duty) were held, the union leaders or the members of the strike committee also used a microphone, to make sure of being heard by their listeners, sitting on the floor in the odd bits of space not occupied by machines. I could not see—and I looked for it carefully—the slightest damage done anywhere to any property of the General Motors Corporation. The nearly completed car bodies, for example, were as clean as they would be in the salesroom, their glass and metal shining.

The record of the strikers is a great deal better than that of the city authorities of Flint and of the General Motors Corporation whose eager servants those city authorities have proved to be. A few days before my visit there took place the so-called riot at Fisher Body Number One. I hope the Senate Civil Liberties Committee will investigate that riot. I believe they will find it as disgraceful an incident in American labor relations as we have seen in a long time. Here, in briefest outline, is the story.

For ten days, the sit-down strike had continued with the tacit consent of the General Motors Corporation. Then, on Monday, January 11, these tactics were suddenly changed. The heat in the plant, controlled from an external source, was cut off. Friends of the strikers were refused access to the building for the purpose of bringing food. The main gate of the plant was locked and ladders giving access to the windows were taken away. It was

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evident that an attempt was being made to force the men out of the building. Late that day, the police blockaded the streets adjacent to the plant. Persons whose cars were parked in the area were brusquely told to go elsewhere. The police assembled in force, with revolvers, gas guns and grenades, loaded with both tear and nauseating gas. The private guards inside the plant, who had heretofore shown no hostility to the strikers, refused to unlock the gates and let food come in. (I might add that when the strikers took away the keys, these guards promptly retired to the ladies' lavatory, locked themselves in, and stayed there, as a result of which the strikers have been charged with kidnaping.) Meanwhile, friends of the strikers had gathered in the streets outside, and when the gates were opened by the sit-downers, the mêlée began. For five hours, the police fought the crowd, with clubs, tear and nauseating gas and revolvers. They shot fourteen people, one of whom may die. Hundreds of others suffered minor injuries or were affected by the gas which, contrary to general opinion, can and often does have extremely serious consequences.

It is a paradox of modern life that the strikers during this medieval struggle should have been aided by such an ultra-modern device as a "sound truck," an automobile equipped with loud speaker and microphone. Throughout the strike this equipment had been used in open-air meetings, in trips through the city to advertise such meetings, and as a means of communication with the sit-down strikers from the outside. During the Battle of Flint the sound truck was on the scene, with Victor Reuther at the microphone. Reuther, with his two brothers, Roy and Walter, is typical of the new leadership that is coming into the American labor movement, young, well educated, the sort of man who could probably make a lot of money if he cared to accept the dominant American pattern as people like Knudsen and Sloan have accepted it. Victor Reuther, from the sound truck, directed the strategy of the strikers, even when the police began shooting at him through the windows of the Chevrolet factory across the street and he was forced to drop to the floor, taking the microphone with him, to avoid being hit. A dramatic incident of the struggle came when a young woman, the wife of a striker (there were many women in the crowd, who got from the police the same treatment the men did), rushed to the truck, took the microphone, told the police what she thought of them and demanded that they stop shooting at the workers, members of their own class.

Throughout the strike, the citizens of Flint have acted as though they were trying to give a model demonstration of the cringing subservience characteristic of public officials in a one-company town. The local newspaper has been 100-percent anti-striker 100 percent of the time. The local broadcasting station has given its facilities to practically anybody on the company's side but has refused to permit the strikers to tell their story. Everybody now knows about Judge Edward D. Black, who issued an injunction against the strikers while himself holding more than 3,600 shares of General Motors stock—an action that stirred even the excessively lethargic American Bar Association. A "Flint Alliance" has been formed, a semi-fascist group along the lines of the vigilante organizations familiar elsewhere in the country. Money has been spent freely for expensive billboard advertising in Flint upholding the so-called "American plan"—which means in a nutshell as little money as possible for the workers and as much as possible for the owners.

While Flint has been the front-line trench of a battle that has included many other cities, all the way from Oakland in the West to Atlanta in the Southeast, the GHQ for the strikers has been the office of the United Auto Workers in Detroit. Here Homer Martin, youthful, pink-cheeked president of the union, sits behind a twenty-dollar oak desk and directs the struggle that means so much, not only to the automobile workers, but to the CIO and to the whole future of American labor. On the day I saw him he had been almost without sleep for forty-eight hours; he had been battling for twelve and fourteen hours at a time with the best brains and the strongest wills money can buy, engaged to defend the corporation; yet he remained calm and low-voiced, sure of ultimate victory and entirely conscious of its significance. It is probably true that if he and John L. Lewis of the CIO had been entirely free to pick their own time and place, the struggle in automobiles would have come somewhat later, might even have been postponed until after a victory had been won in steel or in rubber or in coal. The auto workers' strike was primarily a rank-and-file movement. Whether it will be successful cannot be predicted at the time of this writing. But it has already achieved one or two notable things. It has forced Messrs. Sloan and Knudsen down off their high horse; they said they would not negotiate, and they did. It has brought about a really amazing sense of solidarity and consciousness of their own strength among the members. Reports of increases in membership were pouring into Detroit over the week-end of January 17—500 in a single day in one town, 800 in another, 700 in a third.

Two chief charges have been made against the union in this strike, in the press of the country. It is said that the UAW represents only a small minority of the workers, many others of whom resent the closing of the plants and are eager to get back to work. It is further said that the sit-down strike is an illegal seizure of property and is, as David Lawrence called it, "extortion." As to the first of these points, Martin flatly claims a majority of all the General Motors employees. He charges that photographs published in Detroit newspapers purporting to show mass meetings of anti-union workers were in fact pictures of men waiting to get their pay checks, many of them pro-union. I do not know the exact facts about the matter, but I do know

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this: that no worker wants longer hours and smaller pay when he can get shorter hours and more money. If the union brings these things, all but a minute and crabbed minority will support the organization. I have been watching labor struggles for a third of a century, and I have never yet seen the cry about the poor working man who is coerced by the union come from anybody except those who want to see the working man coerced by the employer. As to whether the sit-down strike constitutes extortion, I might get more excited about this if I did not remember so many instances of extortion on the other side. It is extortion when men are locked out and permitted to come back to work only at starvation wages. It is extortion when they are speeded up very nearly to the breaking point. It is extortion when state authorities send soldiers and police against them with tear gas, clubs and bullets.

In Great Britain, I am informed, the sort of thing that has been happening in Flint would be almost impossible because British employers learned years ago that the way to get on with labor is to encourage strong, responsibly led labor unions, representative of the entire body of workers, and to make with them agreements that will be respected because they are respectable. Fifteen years hence, I have no doubt that collective bargaining will be an established fact throughout American mass industry, bargaining on behalf of the workers as a whole and not on behalf of little groups of highly skilled craftsmen who are now protected—so to speak—by the silver-haired leaders of the A.F. of L. When that day comes, I do not doubt that what happened in Flint last week will seem as remote—and as inexplicable—as the French and Indian wars.

Flint, Michigan. BRUCE BLIVEN.

Two Poets: Jeffers and Millay

MORE THAN any of their contemporaries, Robinson Jeffers and Edna St. Vincent Millay have been known to the wider public that does not read much poetry. Each has expressed a spirit peculiar to the age. Each has rebelled against the standards of puritanical respectability that prevailed when they began writing, but revolt with Mr. Jeffers has never taken the form of health, youth, fulfilment or pleasure that it took with Miss Millay. His attitude is supremely negative, his protest has been set down in tragic and distorted sexual images. Studying history and modern psychology Mr. Jeffers has reduced human behavior, civilization itself, to a criticism of human motives. The positive individualism of Miss Millay's poetry, bent on seizing and enjoying life in its complexity, was also a criticism of society. But it was limited to the post-war reaction against gentility when the romantic opportunism of Greenwich Village life welcomed young writers and young morals. To the Western poet, choosing remoteness, there fell a task more definite and more susceptible to failure—a long look forward and backward into history to pass judgment on man.

Beginning in 1924 with the intricate and incestuous "Tamar," which was followed by "Roan Stallion," the list of Mr. Jeffers' verse-narratives includes eight volumes, containing more than a dozen stories and many shorter poems. The unerring psychic unity of a story is one of his capital achievements. In addition he has to an unusual degree mastery of the narrative form and an uncanny ability to impart life. Unless we accept the tragic but gentle character of "The Loving Shepherdess," and to a lesser degree "Dear Judas," all his themes are of vehemence, intense and frequently frustrated passion, perversion, bitter introspection; and sex being consummated, repeatedly, for the gesture is nearly as common in his dramas as *attitude* and *arabesque* in Russian choreography.

After twelve years of such preference it is of some value to consider whether his choice of spiritual morbidity and self-infatuated decay is as right as it must have seemed to his own feeling all these years. Oddly enough it is still necessary to point out that his painful motifs of introversion are intended as racial symbols of the same evil on a broader and more fatal plane, that of civilization turning in upon itself. His Orestes in "The Tower Beyond Tragedy" clearly achieves freedom from the involvements of humanity. Barclay, in "The Women at Point Sur," aims and fails of the same mark in testing the socially and biologically abhorrent deed (incest between father and daughter), as a means of liberation from both good and evil. To quote Mr. Jeffers, "Just as Ibsen, in 'The Wild Duck,' made a warning against his own idea in the hands of a fool, so 'Point Sur' was meant to be a warning; but at the same time a reassertion." Further, the book was intended to be

> an attempt to uncenter the human mind from itself. There is no health for the individual whose attention is taken up with his own mind and processes; equally there is no health for the society that is always introverted on its own members. . . . The book was meant to be a tragedy, that is, an exhibition of essential elements by the burning away through pain and ruin of inertia and the unessential. . . . A valid study in psychology; the study valid, the psychology morbid, sketching the growth of a whole system of emotional delusions from a "private impurity" that was quite hidden from consciousness until insanity brought it to the surface.

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Mr. Jeffers has given excellent explanations, needed in part because even the most friendly critics have found him obscure—and this in spite of the fact that, at the time of reading, his dramas move with such intensity that it seems of secondary importance to derive a further meaning. He has added to his earlier exegesis in his last book, "Solstice." "The theme of self-contradiction and self-frustration," he says of the introductory piece, "intends to express a characteristic quality of this culture-age." The bothersome question as to the validity of Mr. Jeffers' choice of subjects arises for two reasons, the first of which is the nature and source of his convictions concerning society. Belief in political and cultural good, if he ever possessed it, has been replaced by intense social pessimism and revulsion. He is "quits with the people." His poetry mourns "the hopeless prostration of the earth Under men's hands and their minds."—"Civilization is a transient sickness."—"Humanity is needless." His Cassandra cries, "Cut humanity Out of my being, that is the wound that festers." He is convinced of something very like a mythology of human tension and decay, and to it, as one pointing out the evil, he has promised his best in notable artistry. He has no relation discernible, no mutual cause with movements of his own time beyond the subjective relation, the shared honesty of good art. That, in my opinion, would be sufficient for a mind so independent and so well established both in nature and in creative intelligence.

On the other hand—and this must have been said before—it is evident that the problem of good and evil in his poetry is the result of his radical dissociation from the mass of humanity for whom life goes on urgently without the refined distraction of choice or reflection. Like all mythology, if one may call it that, his contains an important truth. He is striking at the root of a definite social neurosis. Nevertheless, however objective his opinion may seem, it is certainly in great part the result of his own carefully guarded isolation and dislike of "the animals Christ was rumored to have died for." It would be impertinent to offer Mr. Jeffers' work as a proof of mere rationalization. But he has recommended war, the cruelest of man's manias, as a way of cleansing civilization and leading life back to reality. At such a moment one knows that his reasoning about the primitive fundamentals, to which he would return consciousness, has betrayed him.

But a second reason for questioning his choice of subject is the nature of tragedy itself. There is a kind of willing insanity in many of his characters that robs them of the essence of real tragedy. They do not resist their own furies. They consume in them. Their fate, with the terrible exception of Cawdor, rarely moves us beyond horror. Mr. Jeffers has kept the true value of his stories symbolic while endowing them with his remarkable realism of style. Crazed with egotistical desire or self-accusation, his people speak with the abrupt and boiling language of gods at the same moment that they are proved to be citizens of California out gathering shellfish. His powers of realism and tempo are miraculous. He has used them now for twelve years on people whose pathology is so absolute that their problems can be only the problems of the mad. What should be tragedy comes alarmingly close to overwrought cataclysm (remember the death scene in "Tamar") not because our prudery cheats us, but because our sense of cartoon, monstrosity, is nearly provoked. In all his narratives only one character of real importance, Fayne Frazier of "Give Your Heart to the Hawks," makes any move biologically or spiritually beyond the destruction inherent in the drama. "Annihilation is the most beautiful word" and the one most often made flesh.

"The Tower Beyond Tragedy," in contrast, achieves the intention of tragedy and is often a supreme piece of writing. It contains no conflict between the ends of tragedy, of megalomaniac introversion and of realism. Orestes and his salvation do not have to be translated into another set of values to have the desired meaning. He can say, "I have slain my mother. . . . I have cut the meshes and fly like a freed falcon. . . . I have fallen in love outward. . . . I will not waste inward upon humanity." He becomes the tragic act and the emblem of redemption that Mr. Jeffers intends, full of the main ethic he has expounded in his other poems. The story is safe in antiquity, safe in the tragic tradition, doubly safe in the code and system of modern psychologic symbols. But when people of our own earth kill their children, desire corruptly, practise incest, long for annihilation, die slowly in great agony from mercury tablets saved over from another purpose, the formula of tragic introversion becomes, *after repeated use,* worn out. It is in excess of the significance and truth of the puppets it moves. The author, writing on the level of the unconscious, leaves us with faulty reasons for carrying over his symbols into the society for which they should stand as correctives.

To be stressed, and no subject for contention, is Mr. Jeffers' profound relationship with nature. All the elements of earth, water and sky are so fused into his pages that there are continual weathers blowing, filling the world and surging through the drama. Nature is the one state, fierce yet impassive, that this poet respects. Only his isolation on the beaten coast and his experience of the Pacific forests and hills could enable him to bring them, a new country, first to the point of emotion and then to the point of words that so mysteriously preserve their fact. That he has done this for American literature and for the Western earth is, in the record of the civilization he deplores, of some historic moment. He believes that the earth will be comforted only when the cities are "gone down, the people fewer and the hawks more numerous." In the meantime his poetry will, in its strange powers and its beauty of line, continue to be an event in the settling of the American mind on the last shore.

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In reading Miss Millay's poetry one is always struck by the thought that she has been fortunate in her time of emergence—or that the time was fortunate in her. After the War and during the early twenties she expressed, particularly for women and for youth, a spirit that was symptomatic of the moment. While this spirit appears in poems that weigh least or too prettily in review, it is significant that it added much to her immediate popularity. She gave voice to a new freedom, a new equality, the right of the woman to be as inconstant in love as the man and as demanding of variety. To what extent it was actually applied as a new ethic by Miss Millay's very numerous admirers one hesitates to say. It was, however, a timely statement of intellectual and biological equality, an aspect of feminism for the first time put into poetry of audacity, lyrical quality and vogue.

It is interesting to note that many of her more serious poems coming at a later period, especially the sonnet sequence "Fatal Interview," are in celebration of the opposite practice, that of romantic love or what is more crudely (or exactly) called transference. It is this state to which literature is indebted for some of the most treasured examples of the poetic art. It is also precisely this state which is passing, for the moment at least, from contemporary poetry. And not because of advanced feminism, but because of a tendency to explore and hold suspect the sources of such emotion when it appears in spectacular form. There will always be readers who go to Miss Millay, a poet of love, for the vicarious enjoyment of emotion as well as the indelible loveliness of such lines as "Oh, sleep forever in the Latmian cave." With her latest book, however, she has come a noticeable distance from the private drama of the early and middle poems. One cannot prophesy, but it is unlikely that she will return to write of romantic passion and the crises of personal attachment. That something is thus lost from poetry is true. But any gain in objectivity is, after a few years, a gain for feeling and hence for the heart, when it again enjoys authority.

Miss Millay is not to be classed among the "makers" who have left language altered and disturbed by their experiments, and ready for new forms and sensibilities. Such a poet was Father Hopkins. She is one of those who take the known forms that offer the readiest vehicle, technically and emotionally, and thus save themselves much loss of time, much doubt. Of her own day in modernism of intellect, she has yet been nearest another age technically. The sonnet was ideally suited to her wants and she surrendered herself to the iambic line and all the machinery of the form, certain to work and work so musically in her hands. Its good brevity, its psychological moments, its fine style of being a capsule of infinity, the effect of an idea ravished and made quotable, all this she was familiar with. That she was able with no hesitation to accept the continuity of a traditional form meant that she wrote in measures already possessing emotional associations for all readers. There was an exchange of gifts, for the sonnet received something from Miss Millay. She took the principle of surprise common to the final lines and developed it into a clever note of drama. She brought her own New England into the sonnet, the weeds and the weedy ocean. She gave to it, as to her other lyrics, homely and modern details and sometimes the grandeur of folk heroism—like the women of Matinicus, lifted in an unforeseen and local metaphor clean out of time and into pathos. She brought to the sonnet the interest and ferment of conversation. She made the form sophisticated, versatile and highly feminine.

It is not easy now to recapture in one's own words the sense of freshness and transparent revelation that her early lyrics conveyed. In these also it had been her fortune to take frequently a traditional form, the elegy, and make it immediate and tender. Her contribution to method has been chiefly in two directions: an infusion of personal energy and glow into the traditions of lyric poetry, and the deceptively artless ability to set down the naked fact unfortified. She has pleased the fastidious and did not scorn to please the simple, for even a limited poetic appreciation found in the identical performance something that gave pure pleasure. In the controlled excitement of poems like "The Pioneer" and "When Caesar Fell" and in the sensuous beauty of her sonnets—in these and how many more Miss Millay has given to an always eager public a poetry of indubitable achievement.

It is true, however, that an extravagance of feeling, an indulgence of legendary anguish that belongs to the ultra places and not to the heart of poetry, have thrived beyond wisdom in her lines. One deplores the overdramatic ring in a brilliant measure. Yet it is equally true that an egotism never weak, and one of the best talents for lyrical anger in all literature, have saved her from a problem that other women poets have been torn by. Miss Millay has never been apologetic about the right to love or to suffer. The state of "Justice in Massachusetts" has been for her a tragic social fact. Nevertheless, she has not joined the troubled group of women poets unable to believe in the significance of their personal emotions, but whom neither middle-class backgrounds nor experience have fitted to be the good proletarian poets they feel they should become.

In her latest book, "Wine from These Grapes," Miss Millay has made an important progress in attitude. She has taken a definite step toward saving her mature art from what one now detects in her younger verse as the poet's legend about a poet. She is nearer to the stature of "The solid sprite who stands alone." It is the same power, which in the midst of much beauty and excess, was so apparent in sonnet XLVI of "Fatal Interview" and is repeated in poems like "From a Train Window" and "The Return":

> Earth does not understand her child,
> Who from the loud gregarious town

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Returns, depleted and defiled,
To the still woods, to fling him down. . . .

Who has no aim but to forget,
Be left in peace, be lying thus
For days, for years, for centuries yet,
Unshaven and anonymous;

Who, marked for failure, dulled by grief,
Has traded in his wife and friend
For this warm ledge, this alder leaf:
Comfort that does not comprehend.

Miss Millay has carried the mood of the epitaph beyond personal loss. Like Mr. Jeffers, she contemplates the end of civilization. Her mind, however, is on the elegy, not the revulsion. "Epitaph for the Race of Man" is eminent writing. But now that the content of her work is changing, these sonnets still run as smoothly as perfect engines. That is the fate of a traditional measure, no matter how strong may be our sense of continuity in using it. It begins to alarm with the bland ease of the mechanical. One does not ask Miss Millay to forgo the exceptional command of her medium. Yet there could be possible an eloquence neither disinherited nor upstart, an eloquence closer to its own necessity than these sonnets are, a kind of language less dependent on the perfection of the form.

The relation of these two poets to their own day has been simple enough to discern, in terms of rebellion. Their relation to tradition should also be suggested. With Miss Millay it is mainly a matter of technique and an intuitive ease in the emotional style of an earlier and great period in literature. In the case of Mr. Jeffers one feels that his scorn for mankind does in itself largely express his relation to tradition—the tradition of the reformer and the prophet. Mr. Jeffers is a moralist of a harsh but practical order, who feels in his heart that there are too many men and that they clutter up the earth he admires. He offers no encouragement or light to confused humanity, only the warning to man to mistrust man, but he is no less a reformer. There we find his place in tradition, rather than in a comparison to the Greek tragedians. To read "Oedipus," then "Cawdor"—"Medea," then "Solstice"—is to see that the modern poet indicts an entire civilization, or nearly everything that man has accomplished since the beginnings of Christianity. Only time can tell whether the hopes and struggles of this day toward a more decent social order will shame his pessimism. Only time can tell whether the simple forthright rebellion of Edna Millay will seem to the future a more important expression of our century's enquiring mind than Mr. Jeffers' knowledge of the psychological types and his building of a cycle of poetic and vehement dramas upon that modern and controversial word—introversion.

HILDEGARDE FLANNER.

This is the tenth in a series of Revaluations. The next will deal with Willa Cather.—THE EDITORS.

Ballad of the Moon

The moon comes to the forge
In spikenard and in style;
The child stares at the moon
Fixedly all the while.
Across the moving air
The moon holds out her arms;
Her metal breasts are bare,
Shiny and pure and hard.

"Ah, flee, moon, moon, ah, flee!
For if the gypsies come,
They'll stamp your silver heart
For bangles and rings and charms."

"Stop, child, let me dance.
When the gypsies come tonight,
You'll be on the anvil,
Your little eyes shut tight."

"Ah, flee, moon, moon, ah, flee!
I hear the horses near."

"Let go, child, do not press
My starched and shiny dress!"

Rider and horse appear
With a long roll of the drum,
The great drum of the plain,
And the child's little eyes
Shut tight against the scene.

From fields of olive come
The gypsies, dreamy and brown,
The head held very high,
The sleepy eyes half-down.
How the screech owl sends
His long-drawn wailing cry,
While the moon with the child
Wends across the sky.

And in the smithy, tears,
Tears, and gypsy cries,
And the steady roar of the wind,
The wind that never dies.

FEDERICO GARCIA LORCA.

English version by Rolfe Humphries.

Federico García Lorca, one of the half-dozen distinguished poets in contemporary Spain, wrote largely in the traditional measures of the Spanish ballads and folksongs. His accomplishments included more than one of the arts. He exhibited paintings in Barcelona in 1927, and in 1933-34 directed dramatic performances of his own works and those of classical Spanish writers in Buenos Aires and Montevideo, where he also lectured on music, folklore and poetry. He visited this country and Canada in 1929-30. It has now been definitely established that Lorca was executed in Granada, his native city, shortly after it was seized by the rebels.

R. H.

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Washington Notes

Neutrality Goes to Town—But What About England's War Policies?—Mr. Schwellenbach as Prophet

THIS YEAR'S Congress seems to regard neutrality with much the same concupiscent affection with which last year's Congress regarded the bonus. Relatively drastic neutrality legislation is certain to go through Congress with a whoosh. It is no accident that the most articulate advocates of neutrality are Senators Clark and Vandenberg, candidates for the 1940 Democratic and Republican presidential nominations, respectively. As one congressional leader puts it: "The voters are crazy over neutrality."

Since Congress opened, the Senate neutrality bloc has met frequently to decide on its program. The present law covering arms, ammunition and implements of war will be made permanent. Probably an embargo will also be placed on the raw materials of munitions, particularly scrap iron and copper. The export of scrap tin is already regulated by law. Commodities that may be consumed by either civilian populations or armies, such things as wheat, cotton and lard, will be limited to "normal," peacetime quantities. In addition, belligerents will be obliged to pay cash for what they buy, and to carry away their purchases in their own ships.

The State Department is still angrily opposed to mandatory legislation. Mr. Roosevelt is also supposed to be against it. The Democrats in Congress, however, do not anticipate that Mr. Roosevelt will actively try to influence their position. They say that mandatory legislation has demonstrated to a startling degree its v.a., or voters' appeal, and that Mr. Roosevelt is too good a pal to ask them to stand aside and let Mr. Vandenberg monopolize the popular applause.

With the most drastic neutrality legislation since Jefferson's first administration almost within their grasp, a number of left-wingers in Congress are beginning to be assailed by inner qualms. The most important of these doubts concern the probable war policies of the British Empire. According to left-wing skeptics, another world war would see the commandeering of the world's merchant shipping almost from the first moment of hostilities. High enough prices would be offered for American vessels, either directly or through neutrals, to make it worth while for our owners to sell. At the same time, a strict control would be placed over the commercial credit resources of all neutral countries, other than those of the United States. International trade would fall almost wholly into Britain's hands.

Another world war, the left-wing skeptics insist, will be merely a continuation of the war temporarily interrupted in 1918, and the same worldwide regimentation that existed then will immediately be reëstablished. In 1918, the Supreme War Council of the Allies, among many other things, served as an incredibly vast export-and-import trust. Scarcely a ton of freight moved anywhere in the world without prior permission from London. In the event of a new world war, the United States could perhaps save its trade with Latin America. But all of our trade with Europe and Africa—not merely our trade in munitions, but all of it—and probably all of our trade with Asia would vanish, except to the extent that the British permitted it to continue.

England and her allies would buy our cotton, wheat and other farm products up to the limit set by our neutrality laws. But it is extremely doubtful that England would provide the facilities necessary for our peacetime industrial exports. There would be a violent dislocation affecting perhaps half of our total foreign trade. American business men would come hot-foot to Washington, declaring piteously that they were being forced to lay off workers, and to default on loans at their local banks. They would then add that, suddenly and mysteriously, they had received orders for relatively innocent products, such as engine parts, or tractor wheels, or military boots, and please couldn't the neutrality regulations be interpreted in a generous spirit, so that these orders might be filled. With the British holding all foreign trade in an iron grip, the skeptics insist that this country would soon be dragged into munitions making.

They also point out that the British and Dutch Empires, between them, have a virtual monopoly on certain raw materials, notably rubber and tin. England could plausibly announce that, to assure herself of adequate reserve supplies, she was compelled to place an embargo of her own on exports of rubber to the United States. Our only sources of rubber would then be the Firestone plantation in Africa and that of Ford on the Amazon. About the time that the lack of tires had brought our automobile industry face to face with ruin, the English government might suggest that, as a special favor to us, it was prepared to hand over a limited quantity of rubber in return for a relaxation of our neutrality laws.

It would be wrong to imply that the left-wing skeptics in Congress have lost interest in the enactment of neutrality legislation. Most of them believe that strict neutrality laws will at least be of great psychological value. But they are becoming convinced that nothing, ultimately, will keep us from being involved in another great war except a President and Congress able to resist the pressure that manufacturers, hungry for war profits, will be certain to bring against them.

One of the most active members of the Senate neutrality bloc, Mr. Lewis B. Schwellenbach, believes that we are most likely to find peace in closer relations with Latin America. In 1916, as a student at Washington State University, Mr. Schwellenbach wrote a prize oration in which he predicted: first, that, despite the "he-kept-us-out-of-war" campaign of Mr. Wilson, the United States would in fact enter the War; second, that, with the help of America, the Allies would win, and that an international peace organization would be established; third, that this peace organization would be unable to deal with the conflicts of modern imperialism, and would consequently fail; fourth, that the United States, in its search for peace, would thereafter surrender its trade interests in Europe and Asia, and turn southwards to Latin America. Slightly awed by the swift fulfilment of his first three prophecies, Mr. Schwellenbach now awaits the fulfilment of his fourth. His hopes have been greatly lifted by the recent Buenos Aires peace conference, and he is at work on ways to encourage South American trade. It is undeniable that if the great bulk of our foreign trade were with Latin America, we would be largely immunized from war. However, before this can come about, immense changes will have to take place, and it is possible that Hitler will not wait until we are ready.

Washington. T. R. B.

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Other People's Money

Landis Resigns—Wall Street Called Him Constructive—A Pretty Good Formula for Success —Death of a Liberal

LAST WEEK I wrote a pre-mortuary piece in anticipation of Mr. James Landis' retirement from the Securities and Exchange Commission. Now he has made good for me by resigning. So it is in order to add a few lines on what might dolefully be called the Landis episode.

A man in public life must make up his mind whose approval he desires and then put up patiently with the castigation of the others. He will be known by those groups whose applause he seeks and wins.

If you go into Wall Street you will find it ringing with his praises. The Wall Street Journal said: "Retirement of Dr. Landis is regrettable from the public point of view. His tenure of office has been marked by the qualities essential in public officials," etc. The New York Times, liberal to a fault, said: "As an administrator he has been conciliatory, patient, firm, and has won the good will of critics at first inclined to be suspicious or hostile."

The Times's news account of the resignation recalled that "when he was elected, the choice was hailed in Wall Street and elsewhere as a happy one. Although Wall Street interests had originally been skeptical of him as lacking practical experience, after contact with him they paid tribute to his fairness and his constructive attitude."

All of which is true. He was "fair" and "constructive" and "sound" according to Wall Street standards. Mr. Landis turned out to be a gentleman who would not hurt a flea, particularly a flea wearing spats and carrying a cane and belonging to the right set.

However, it is not quite true that Wall Street began by hostility. Its first contact with him was when Fiorello LaGuardia introduced a bill to regulate the stock exchange —a very mild affair compared with the one introduced later. The law firm of Carter, Ledyard and Milburn, counsel for the New York Stock Exchange, hired Mr. Landis, then a professor of Law in Harvard, to give them an opinion for congressional consumption on the constitutionality of the LaGuardia bill. This was in 1932, before liberalism had become so popular and safe. Mr. Landis obligingly supplied the Stock Exchange with a long argument to prove that the attempt to regulate security trading or speculation was unconstitutional.

They had confidence in him then. But later the New Deal flowered into power and opportunities. Mr. Landis turned up as a Federal Trade Commissioner and finally as chairman of the Commission to exercise this unconstitutional power. Naturally the Exchange was a little "hostile" and "suspicious." But Mr. Landis soon put them at ease and earned their applause.

Landis is a living exemplar of a very good formula for success in this practical world. First you have to remember that the desirable rewards are in the hands of very respectable people and that the worst reputation you can earn is that of being an agitator. Therefore, begin by being a liberal—even a little leftish—but calm, judicial, intellectual. Then, at the proper time, suddenly reveal that you have a practical side to your nature, that you know how to respect the difficult roles that acquisitive leaders must play and that allowances must be made for them, and that, when all is said and done, you have a due regard for the preservation of certain regrettable, perhaps, yet inescapable necessities of business practice. You will be amazed at the suddenness with which you will be taken up by the best people. If you are a newspaperman you may find yourself with a comfortable corner in The Herald Tribune, like Mr. Walter Lippmann. If you are a lawyer you may turn up as dean of the Harvard Law School. It was indeed poetically just that Mr. Landis' encomium in The Herald Tribune should have come from his spiritual kinsman, Mr. Lippmann.

The New York Times even suggests that Mr. Landis' trip to Cambridge is a mere excursion and that he may return to the Supreme Bench. All this is based upon an assumption about Landis which we have seen in the growing. It is the fruit of that unpleasant phenomenon in American journalism known as the "build-up," sometimes called "shirt-stuffing." It stems from the newspapers' fondness for caricature—the delineation of character with a few broad, exaggerated brush strokes. The portrait, once made, is seldom altered. Let a man enter the papers as a silent man or comedian or brainster and he is doomed thereafter to appear in that character.

Thus with Landis. Circumstances now forgotten made it convenient to thrust Landis forward in the Securities Act and the Stock Exchange Commission, precisely because he was bright but colorless, liberal but not an agitator. The agitators who made those acts and forced them through remained in the background. Landis had nothing to do with writing the Stock Exchange Act. That is well known to those who did write it. He loaned a law clerk for certain preliminary work. He knew at the time little of what it was all about. He merely hovered on the edges of the job.

How much he contributed to the Securities Act I do not know. But I know he contributed greatly to its emasculation. He and Commissioner Matthews permitted Wall Street lawyers to introduce three devices which render that act pretty weak. One is the rule permitting registrants to withhold essential information until the last minute and file it *nunc pro tunc*. The other is the rule under which certain essential information is omitted and then supplied only when a "deficiency letter" is issued by the Commission indicating what is necessary. That, and that only, is then filed. And that deficiency letter becomes later a complete defense by the registrant against any attempt to enforce civil liability for commissions on the ground that the registrant did all that the Commission required. The third rule is the one that permits certain facts in the registration to be treated as confidential. Why shouldn't Wall Street look upon Mr. Landis as "constructive"?

He, more than any other man, has prevented the Commission, after two years, from taking any effective action on the one big racket which the Exchange guards—the speculation of its own members. Some day Landis may go to the Supreme Court Bench. But let the appointment come from some future Landon or Coolidge. Never, in the name of all that is reasonable, from a liberal leader.

JOHN T. FLYNN.

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Othello

Othello. New Amsterdam Theatre, January 6, 1937.

NOTHING should be more obvious than that Mr. Robert Edmond Jones could have done his production of "Othello" in a style as rich as rich can be. Better than any designer in our theatre he knows the substance of Tintoretto or Veronese, both of whom were at the height of their painting at the moment in Venetian-Cyprian-Turkish history that the play presents: 1570. Or the lesser painters of something like forty years later, when Shakespeare's play was written, would have been equally accessible. Instead, Mr. Jones has chosen a much simpler design. The settings are kept very much simplified, the costumes for the men, despite the world of design and luxury of fashion in Venetian dress, rarely, save in Othello's case, get farther than stripes, and none too often that. The clothes of Desdemona and Emilia—Bianca was cut out—are by no means elaborated. Within the settings there is often austere and beautiful drawing, fine placement, as, for instance, in the stair of the first scene or the scene before the Sagittary; and the use of the great door for the Cyprus arrival is vastly simplified but highly imaginative dramatic décor.

The artist here is entirely within his rights, of course, to make what simplifications he chooses, according to his judgment and at his own peril. Whatever you may think of the result, for or against, one fact remains as not to be disputed: to the acting it is all the more left to carry the burden of the play's variety, opulence, passion and rich mass.

As for the acting in "Othello," you got the sense of a settled and careful treatment; the directing behind the play had arrived at many decisions. The sum of the acting, as it stood, however, was lean and unsatisfying. Perhaps, for one thing, the problem of grading the other performances up to and from Mr. Huston's Othello was hard to solve.

Mr. Walter Huston's portrayal of Othello is so noble in its sincerity, so tender, so pure in intention, and so notable in its metrical skill and fluency, that you can only grieve to set down the lack of real power inside the role, and the, to me at least, unexpected dryness, even a slight rasp in tone, that his voice exhibited. Othello is voluble but essentially inarticulate; his magnetism must be immense, for everything in the story points to that; he is not stupid; he has the simple human qualities to a magnificent degree, but all of them wholly and only alive within the tremendous current of his nature. But if it lacks power the character makes no sense, being without current and tragic blind propulsion. And without power the acting cannot exploit the play or even hold it together. The whole of this drama is like a storm gathering; and unless we get the sense of an infinity of nature within this magnificent human creature and of the gathering of forces as vast and distinct as those of a storm (as distinct and conflicting as in classic drama) we end nowhere. No play of Shakespeare's has more tender motifs and exchanges, or a more exact domestic prose and daylight literalness in detail, more surprising lyric immediacy; and yet none is so objective, so remote and complete, so classic in its clarity and motivations. Side by side with the literal and exact reactions in Othello, the humble revelations of life, we have the longer passages that compose the chief mass of his presentation. They consist of declamation and the rush forward of his subconscious, with its range and power and tragic capacity. Despite Mr. Huston's failure in the part, taking it as a whole, it can be said that the line of his conception grew steadily more defined and moving. It is also possible that he might have gone somewhat farther if he had had the support of a fuller and more pressing stream in the acting around him.

A single instance of this is in the final scene. For the first moments after his entrance Mr. Huston's acting was profound and beautiful. But after Desdemona was killed, Miss Natalie Hall's Emilia entered and lacked almost everything. We have here one of the most astonishing passages in Shakespeare, where he turns this household inferior, suddenly gone wild with horror and grief, loose on Othello—"you the blacker devil!"—"thou dost belie her and thou art a devil"—"thou art rash as fire, to say that she was false." He confronts Othello's vast, heightened emotion with this screaming assault and rash frenzy, like a cat thrown in the face of a Greek mask. The bewilderment and wreck that fill out the rest of the play proceed from the terrific source of this scene between Othello and his wife's companion. The crudest actress from a Sicilian cart might at least have hit the core to it, not left us this thin wash.

Miss Nan Sunderland, in the role of Desdemona, so beautiful, homely and translucent, gave evidence of understanding many things her performance failed to create.

As for Iago, that role about which endless interpretations and arguments are to be found in any edition of the play, Mr. Brian Aherne gave us the easiest of all the Iagos: the double-dyed, obvious villain, sliding tones, rolling eyes, crouching positions now and then, and asides that are warmly confidential with the audience. The result is as sure-fire in one respect as it is uninteresting and banal in another. As audience we may say that an Iago to watch, all black, evil, cerebral, Renaissance, is well enough; but this other effect is not only stage platitude, it is unpleasant; we have no wish to be winked into so foul a bosom. The amount of emotional quality or glow that Mr. Aherne put into Iago hurt Othello's effects. The most interesting approach to Iago is not to conceive him as wronged, in military preferment or in his marriage bed (as to which you can see from the lines that his inquiry is casual), and therefore burning for revenge. Conceive him as filled with a hatred and resentment of Othello and looking for reasons to justify it, and then exercising and airing his particular nature toward a mischievous end that engages and absorbs it. Mr. Aherne's Iago was too aggressive and obviously insistent; not to coax them into his traps but to set the traps and watch his human victims, by their sheer human elements, get themselves caught, this is what could keep Iago the complete foil to Othello, and the comment on him, as man and tragedy, that Shakespeare intended. Mere villain is mere devil, theatre lollipop.

The one chief exhilarating thing about this production of "Othello" is the reading of the verse. Here we have no dodging of the essential form, none of that muffing as in the first scene of Mr. McClintic's "Hamlet," nor swallowing of the pattern as Miss Judith Anderson did in the Queen's latter speeches, none of that destructive chopping into links of five or six beats that Miss Ashcroft does in "High Tor." The reading in general throughout "Othello" is tactfully on the side of less pomposity than the old the-

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atre required, but hits straight toward the sense as revealed in the verse beat. Mr. Huston, for example, takes the long speeches without apology or blur, fully admitted, shaped into their due sense, structure and ease. He lets this verse give you, as it is meant to do, Othello's scope and impact, and the human weakness implicit in such splendor.

STARK YOUNG.

East River Hamlet: II

TO CONCLUDE with "Winterset," which somehow has to be dealt with as both prize play and prestige picture: Any analysis of Maxwell Anderson as a poet does small justice to his dramatic sense. The lines for Trock, Gaunt, Shadow, Garth, the Cop and the rest would be weak without the actors to conquer them and give them reality in their own characters: Eduardo Ciannelli, Edward Ellis, Stanley Ridges, Paul Guilfoyle—not to forget Mr. Meredith's good work as Mio. But the original conception of these characters is Anderson's, and as set up against each other they make exciting material for the theatre. There have been few factors in a play so dramatic as Trock's entrances and command of terror, the unearthly return of Shadow, the tightening ring of men with guns toward the end and the ironic arrival of the police. And there is another kind of high drama in old Esdras' surrender to brash youth, his painful attempt to break through, his slow climb to the roof. If directors and cutters can't take such material and make it grow in tension all the way through, it's their own fault. And as I've suggested, there is a fault here, in the dispersal of attention, the dawdling over incidentals, the obvious approach to "surprise" events illustrated in the fact that you never hear a shot without seeing the gun being leveled for thirty seconds first.

The movie covers up some of the play's weak spots, manufactures some of its own, and places others in merciless focus—the actual trial prologue demonstrates how little the principal theme had to do with ideals of social justice; the survival of boy and girl at the end only makes more clear that Mio's trouble was personal, could be redeemed by love, in short that a stageful of corpses at the curtain does not necessarily make tragedy. So that in many ways you get the feeling that a first-class production still lies somewhere between the play and the movie. In spite of the tradition of stage acting, the registry of the same principals is sharper, the support of Hollywood feature players more satisfying, in the film version. And in spite of the range of a camera and the lavish care given its work here, the stage sets for "Winterset" come off best as being near, absolute and oppressive with the necessary mood.

There is no end to the tit-for-tat that could be recited, but in this case it would lead to a dead end anyway, because of doubtful beginnings. You get Mr. Anderson making good lowbrow melodrama acceptable to conscious highbrows by hiring a poetic dress suit and winding on the muffler of terrific social overtones; and you get from this a Broadway success that resounds clear to the RKO lot in Hollywood. Hollywood of course hears of the dinner suit and muffler and orders up a gross of the same. But Hollywood isn't playing to any such narrow group of super-literates, wishfuls and snobs. It junks such poetics as would draw a horse laugh from its own universal audience; but generally forbears to tamper even when it comes to the surprising way everybody in the world pops up at the right time in some 200 square yards of inaccessible Manhattan pavement. Failing in vividness, its version still has everything you could ask in the way of spirit, creation, fidelity to truth. It reduces willful complexities to simple terms, and makes a story.

All of which is no doubt heartening to such as may wish the movies would stop being the thing they are and become something else. But to those of us who see the film as a growing art, all such copies must seem no more productive to healthy development than breathing exercises under an oxygen tent.

OTIS FERGUSON.

The Bandwagon

In Melrose, Mass., Mayor Robert A. Perkins, concerned about a winter carnival scheduled for January 24, for which expensive equipment has been installed, led 100 children in a prayer for snow.—*News item in The New York Herald Tribune.*

Thousands of decent persons are unaware of the fact that the so-called child labor amendment is a carefully worded piece of radical legislation designed to rob parents of their rights over children and transfer control of every child up to eighteen years of age to a bureaucratic group in Washington.—*From an editorial in The Boston Traveler.*

THE HITCHING POST

Because the Graces are Catholic and the Byerses Protestants the wedding is being held in the riding academy.—*Report of a wedding in The New York World-Telegram.*

IT MAY BE FOR YEARS AND IT MAY BE FOREVER

Asked if the corporation were prepared to start collective bargaining with workers Thursday, Knudsen [executive vice-president of General Motors] said that conferences designed to accomplish that purpose had been going on for several years.—*News item in The Detroit Free Press.*

SPONTANEOUS COMBUSTION, 4,000 CASES

Four thousand non-striking Flint workers gathered at a spontaneous meeting in the IMA auditorium Thursday afternoon and condemned outside labor agitators.—*News item in The Flint, Mich., Journal.*

SCOTLAND'S BURNING

The newest thing in parties is planned by Mr. and Mrs. William Pope to celebrate New Year's eve at their Winnetka home.

They have issued invitations for an "Edward and Wally" party and are asking all of their guests, many of whom are Evanstonians, to come as characters in the great international romance.

William Avery of Evanston is going as the Archbishop of Canterbury, with Mrs. Avery as Princess Elizabeth, and Mr. and Mrs. William Turner, also of Evanston, have chosen to personify Edward and Wally in Scotland.—*From The Evanston, Ill., Review.*

Our readers are invited to contribute to this column and $1 will be paid for each item used. Address The Bandwagon, care of The New Republic.—THE EDITORS.

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CORRESPONDENCE

The State Department v. Spain and China

SIR: In view of the tempest that has been stirred up in our peace-loving press by the sale of second-hand American planes to the legitimate government of Spain, engaged in suppressing a fascist rebellion within its borders, may I call the attention of our agitated press and our agitated State Department to the fact that for ten years leading American firms have been selling latest-model military planes to the Chiang Kai-shek government of China similarly engaged in suppressing a formidable rebellion on its territory, except that it happens to be a communist rebellion instead of a fascist rebellion. Peculiarly enough, our State Department has managed to remain quite unperturbed over this matter even though China was our largest customer for military planes last year. Are we to assume that the State Department regards the bombing of Chinese communist villages by American planes and American aviators as a form of sport, whereas the attempt of Madrid to defend its women and children against German and Italian bombers by building up an air fleet, is a horse of a different (red?) color? Or are we to draw the more logical inference that the "neutrality" of the State Department is a not-so-subtle form of intervention. When is a "civil war" not a civil war, when is a "recognized government" not a recognized government?

ALTER BRODY.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

All Shades of Opinion, But—

SIR: I am giving instructions that the subscription of this library to The New Republic should be discontinued.

I believe that a university library should subscribe to journals which express all shades of opinion; but I do not think that it should subscribe to journals, whatever their editorial opinion, which express that opinion in a cheap and offensive way, or allow their contributors to do so. I have just read the uncharitable attack on the British royal family contained in Mr. Brailsford's asinine article on "England after the Crisis" in your issue of January 6. I can assure you that I am not going to be a party to paying out public money for the purchase of a journal which will print an article like this.

W. S. WALLACE,
Toronto, Canada. Librarian, University of Toronto Library.

The Attack on Commonwealth College

SIR: Eastern Arkansas' cotton barons, whose state government neglects schooling for thousands of working-class children, are again after the hide of Commonwealth College, the South's only resident labor training school. Their handmaidens, Representatives Herman Horton and S. A. Gooch of Jonesboro and Wynne plantation districts, are about to try jamming an omnibus bill through the present legislature at Little Rock as a frontal assault upon academic freedom. Aimed openly at closing the college because its students and teachers frequently assist sharecroppers' struggles, this measure will (1) prohibit "alleged teaching of illegal cohabitation" (*sic!*), (2) require a loyalty oath of all teachers, and (3) ban communism as a study subject

Horton, twenty-two-year-old "baby solon," admittedly got his nonsense about intercourse and his motivation for the other two sections from Liberty magazine's recent 150-percent slanderous attack upon Commonwealth. Gooch fathered sedition and nuisance bills which were stillborn in 1935 because of thunderous nation-wide and international protest. He has just reiterated, however: "That school is a nuisance, and I'm going to do everything possible to close it."

Strictly non-factional and ardently progressive, Commonwealth has for thirteen years taught workers and farmers how organized labor can better its economic conditions. About half of the students come from Southern states, many on union-paid scholarships. Francis J. Gorman is the latest addition to the college's advisory board, typical of its twenty-two prominent labor and liberal members.

Commonwealth's battle against this new attack must not be a lone one, for academic freedom generally and Arkansas' civil liberty specifically are at stake. Friends of workers' education must redouble their splendid protest actions of two years ago, and now sound this warning: "Let no one string barbed wire around our schools!"

ARTHUR MCEWEN,
Publicity Director, Commonwealth College.

Mena, Ark.

From The New Republic Mail Bag

Mary Kremer Gray recently argued that Edmund Wilson was unfair to say there were no translations of Pushkin's longer poems. Mr. Wilson replied that he had said there were no translations by poets of the first order, to which Mrs. Gray now answers that he said "failing any kind of a translation," and she mentions several, notably a translation by Professor Elton of "Evgeni Onegin" in The Slavonic Review of the University of London.

Commendation of Max Eastman's recent review of the new Pushkin translation edited by Avrahm Yarmolinsky comes from M. Light of Los Angeles, who says that the translation was a literary crime.

Walter Cox of Denver writes that if Germany wants some of her colonies back she should appeal to Japan to return the ones that country took, since they are better than the African ones, and besides, it would be a mark of Japan's sincerity in the recent mutual agreement.

The American Youth Congress writes us of a pilgrimage to Washington it plans for the week-end of February 19, to petition Congress to pass the American Youth Act. A ball will be held to raise money for this purpose January 23 at 308 West Fifty-ninth Street, New York City.

Philip Stevenson of the Gallup Defense Committee appeals for transportation expenses for lawyers of the Donovon firm who are defending three of the miners without fee before the New Mexico Supreme Court. Contributions should be airmailed to the Gallup Defense Committee, Box 1021, Santa Fé, New Mexico.

In regard to Malcolm Cowley's review of Plekhanov's "Art and Society," V. F. Calverton, editor of The Modern Monthly, informs us that the essential parts of the work were available over ten years ago in The Modern Quarterly.

What's on the Air?

Secretary of Agriculture Henry A. Wallace discusses the problem of "Farm Tenancy." Friday, January 22, 10:30 P.M., CBS.

President Roosevelt speaks from the White House in connection with the annual President's Birthday Ball. Monday, January 25, 10:30 to 11 P.M., NBC-Blue Network.

Neutrality legislation and other topics are considered by the Women's Patriotic Conference on National Defense. Wednesday, January 27, 3:45 P.M., CBS.

Nellie Tayloe Ross, director of the United States Mint, describes "The Mint as a Reflector of Economic Trends." Thursday, January 28, 2:30 to 2:45 P.M., NBC-Blue Network.

Representative Maury Maverick discusses current issues in Congress. Thursday, January 28, 7:45 to 8 P.M., NBC-Blue Network.

Lively debate is promised at a session of America's Town Meeting of the Air devoted to recent activities in the field of organized labor. Thursday, January 28, 9:30 to 10:30 P.M., NBC-Blue Network.

All times given are Eastern Standard.

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

Social Relativity

ASIDE from the introduction, this volume[1] consists of a translation of Professor Mannheim's "Ideologie und Utopie" (1929), and the article "Wissenssoziologie" in Vierkandt's "Handwörterbuch" (1931). The fundamental assumption, expressed in the phrase "sociology of knowledge," is that the mind functions as an instrument in the service of a biological organism, and that as a consequence knowledge and ideas, values, reason and truth, are purely relative (or "relational"), having neither meaning nor validity apart from the particular social situation which generates and conditions them. On the basis of this assumption, Professor Mannheim analyzes various types of social thinking which he distinguishes as "ideology" and "utopia."

An ideology is either "particular" or "complete": the former is an individual's rationalization of his interests; the latter is a general theory or pattern of ideas that rationalizes the interests of a class or serves to justify an existing social regime. The function of an ideology is thus conservative, it operates to conserve an existing regime or the actual interests of a class. A utopia, on the contrary, is revolutionary, a pattern of ideas which aims to undermine a social situation in order to realize, for the individual or the group, a situation that does not yet exist. The distinction is easy to state, but not always to maintain. It is obvious that a utopia may insensibly pass into an ideology. For example, the liberal democratic philosophy was a utopia until the democratic liberal regime was actually established, but it is now an ideology functioning to guarantee that regime; and the communist philosophy must be a utopia everywhere except in Russia, where it now serves as an ideology. Moreover, the liberal democratic philosophy is an effective ideology now, in so far as it is effective, precisely because it distinguishes the existing regime from the ideal that will sometime be realized—in short, precisely because it is to that extent a utopia. So of communism: in so far as it defends the existing regime in Russia it is ideology; in so far as it projects into the future a classless, democratic situation that does not as yet exist, it is utopia.

These refinements are somewhat new, but the general assumptions underlying them are not. It has long been known that "the wish is father to the thought"; and it has long been recognized that all modern thought has been profoundly influenced by relativism, anti-intellectualism, pragmatism, instrumentalism, activism, or what you will. The chief value of Professor Mannheim's work is in his effort to explore systematically, "scientifically," the implications of the relativist approach to sociology—to demonstrate in detail and with precision that "the prevailing philosophical view which cautiously admits that the content of conduct has been historically conditioned, but which at the same time insists upon the retention of eternal forms of value . . . is no longer tenable."

Professor Mannheim's determination to be "scientific" at all hazards makes his writing pedantic, cumbersome and repetitious; so that it is always a question whether the patience of the reader will triumph over the obscurity of the author. Nevertheless, the patient reader will be rewarded by finding much that is penetrating and suggestive. Especially good is the analysis of the liberal and the communistic ideologies, and the perception of the similarities and the differences exhibited by them. Professor Mannheim's "Weltanschauung" is more Marxian than liberal; but he sees well enough that the relativist conception of "truth," which so ruthlessly condemns the liberal ideology to a lingering death, no less ruthlessly condemns communist ideology to the same sad fate. In short, he so resolutely insists upon the contingent nature of all knowledge that we cannot miss the inevitable conclusion: since there are no absolute norms, the entire apparatus of truth, logic, reason and value must submit, like everything else, to the incessant flux that incessantly generates and transforms them.

This conclusion does not disturb Professor Mannheim. He thinks that by bravely recognizing the purely functional character of knowledge we can somehow transcend that limitation. No doubt. If we know that all knowledge is relative, we have already transcended the relativity of knowledge by affirming the universal truth that all knowledge is relative. This precipitates us into the same contradiction that emerges when we say that we can know nothing, since if we know that we know nothing we at least know one thing, which is that we know nothing. Professor Mannheim does not deal with this problem. Perhaps he would say that it is a mere verbal quibble. At all events he proceeds to consider at length the "prospects for a science of politics." He thinks that such a science is possible. It will, however, not be like the science of physics, which rests upon the assumption of a uniformity of behavior in the physical universe. The science of politics will be "dynamic"—a science which, like its subject matter, "is always in the process of becoming, and is always nevertheless bound to the stream from which it flows." Such a science "accepts no theoretical construction as absolutely valid in itself, but reconciles the original standpoints . . . and tries to understand the whole of the views derived from the various perspectives through the whole of the process."

This is not too clear. If it means only that the political scientist should endeavor to understand the "whole of the process" with as little bias and as much intelligence as may be, nothing could be better—or more elementary. But if it means, as it seems to, that this enlarged "view of the whole" is not itself conditioned by the social situation in precisely the same way that the "original standpoints" are, then it denies the assumptions upon which all of Professor Mannheim's work is based. Professor Mannheim's discussion of the science of politics leaves me, as Bunyan said, "much tumbled up and down in my mind." I feel that, having relentlessly pressed all our heads down below the surface of the flowing social process, he first assures us that we can never get out, and then tells us that we can after all escape drowning by frankly recognizing that we are under water. I must confess that I do not share his confidence, but if we are all under water for good no doubt something is gained by recognizing the fact.

CARL BECKER.

[1] Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge, by Karl Mannheim. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. 351 pages. $4.

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Analysis into Prophecy

Hitler Over Russia? The Coming Fight Between the Fascist and the Socialist Armies, by Ernst Henri. Translated by Michael Davidson. New York: Simon and Schuster. 350 pages $2.50.

IT WILL be remembered that in "Hitler Over Europe" Ernst Henri gave an account of German fascism which placed that movement surely and solidly upon its economic base, and in addition analyzed its internal class divisions so acutely that the subsequent tragedies of June 30 and July 25 were stripped of the mystery with which the popular press surrounded them. Since then, one has wondered that so many writers are still concerned with such subsidiary phenomena as the personality of Hitler or the technique of Goebbels' propaganda. This book has both the strength and the shortcomings of its predecessor: it has the same brilliant and vivid writing on politics and events, the same compelling grasp on economics; but it has also the same tendency to a generalization that almost becomes metaphysics, and the same fascinated concern with hypothetical military maneuvers.

The author carries forward his thesis that the heavily overindustrialized Ruhr demands the whole of Central and Eastern Europe for an assured and sufficient market, and to this end is backing the Nazi movement in its frantic expansionist policy. On the way to empire, to the completed Third Reich, the middle classes were first aroused to the destruction of the Republic, and then crushed in the massacre of June 30 when Göring so ruthlessly forestalled the Brown Shirt general staff in their working towards a "second revolution." The next stage in the process is the enlistment of the petty Baltic and Danube states in a crusade against communism, that is, against Russia, to be followed presumably by their own subjugation. July 25 marks the real opening of this second campaign. On that date the struggle for control of the Styrian iron mines resulted in a victory for Mussolini, but that only means a temporary diversion of the main German effort to the Baltic states.

Of course it is a foolish argument that Germany cannot make war on Russia because there is no common frontier. Lithuania will be the Belgium of such a war, not to speak of a direct attack from the Baltic Sea on the exposed vital center of Leningrad, the approaches to which are safe in the hands of Finland and Esthonia. And it is assumed that Poland will be an active ally. This insight into social and economic forces gives the reader a new perspective on Poland. With the realization that the governing group there descends directly from the feudal barons whose vast serf-tilled estates were split among three empires in 1795, and that many of those estates are now collective farms in White Russia, it is conceivable that Poland might renounce the Corridor for an extension towards the east. War on that front is a probability rather than a possibility.

But surely the author is a great deal too sanguine as to the outcome. All his points in regard to relative strength may be well taken. His figures show that Russia is as strong as Germany in iron, steel and electricity production; much stronger in copper, grain, livestock and labor force; incomparably superior in petroleum; weaker in railway mileage and coal only. (Incidentally, Mr. Henri, this very deficiency of Germany accounts for the fascist will to war.) Russia has, of course, the greater army and the greater air force to offset a negligible navy. And the geographical advantage is obvious. On the basis of these factors the author argues not only the impregnability of Moscow, but an early socialist attack and the speedy collapse of Nazi G ...any.

Somehow it is not entirely convincing. To say that a revolutionary China will make the Soviet Siberian army even superfluous against Japan is a very big piece of wishful thinking. Further: in the light of the Spanish situation it is stretching a point to assume a single ally, or even a well wishing neutral friend, for the Soviet Union. There is a cleavage, certainly, between the fascist states and the so-called democracies; but the cleavage between all of the capitalist states on the one hand and the USSR on the other is incomparably deeper.

And that is what makes the outlook so black. If a Continental war ensues in Europe, Great Britain and Italy (much more Rumania), faced with one thing or the other, may well prefer a Russian defeat to the collapse of Germany. For the latter will mean bolshevism on the Rhine, which is now Britain's frontier; while the former will mean only a future, potential, hypothetical, threat to the West. British statecraft does not look ahead for more than ten years. Even France is divided on the issue, and French intervention is in the highest degree doubtful. This sounds dogmatic; but Russia was brought into the League of Nations to be an asset, not a liability.

"Hitler Over Europe" concluded with a prophecy of revolution in Germany, and right there Mr. Henri's analysis ceased to be analysis. "Hitler Over Russia" ends in similar vein and, it is to be feared, with as little justification. It is no use blinking the fact that in the coming war Russia, that is to say, socialism, has a desperate defensive struggle on its hands.

GEORGE MCLURE.

Criticism, Old Style

American Fiction: A Historical and Critical Survey, by Arthur Hobson Quinn. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company. 805 pages. $5.

DR. QUINN is a man of some distinction in the academic world and may be regarded as a fair representative of its thinking. It is good to recall, from time to time, the nature of that thinking. We are apt to forget that the critical writing that appears in the reviews and periodicals does not constitute the entire body of American criticism. There remains the college, of which the most prominent and influential members maintain no relations with the world where tastes and philosophies are the fruits of conflict. That is to say, they play no part whatever in the arenas in which occur those clashes of ideas and principles that determine the direction of an articulate public opinion and, at the same time, discipline or chasten the artist. It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that these professors exert no significant influence. They do so *in camera,* so to speak, but they succeed—through the school teachers they train as well as directly—in forming the prejudices of a very substantial public, which manifests its existence sometimes by the books it elects to the "best-seller" lists and usually by the books it fails to elect.

In examining this volume, then, to learn how the academicians have reacted to the literary thought of recent years, we are astonished to find that they have not reacted at all. Dr. Quinn has produced an exhaustive history of his subject, covering the field from its most tentative beginnings to the year 1920. Yet nowhere in his eight hundred pages is there a passage illuminating the social, intellectual or temperamental origins of the novelists with whom he deals. Nowhere does he attempt to describe a novelist's relation to his time or his community. None of the tremendous advances that have been made in our understanding of both

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the psychological and the historical analysis of literature is in any way reflected in this book. . . . It is not only as if there had never been an Engels, a Pavlov and a Freud, but as if even Parrington had never lived.

In treating historical figures, whose positions are taken for granted, the academician is simply naïve. Dr. Quinn argues, for example, that Howells was "interested in the middle class, for the same reason perhaps that Dickens chose to portray them, because they represent their feelings more openly and therefore provide more appropriate material for fiction." But in treating contemporary figures, where immediate moral and social judgments are involved, the academician reveals himself to be an enemy of every experimental and progressive force in the literature of our day. To quote Dr. Quinn is sufficient.

On Dreiser: his "failure to write great literature hardly needs explanation. The only wonder is that he has been taken so seriously by a school of criticism which believes that he did a service to American literature by his encyclopedic revelation of the lives of male or female sensualists whose standards have an aroma of the barnyard. That there are such people is beyond question; that they are worth writing about is another matter." On Upton Sinclair: his "fanciful economics . . . by which the only cost of a product is the labor involved . . . leave the reader cold, for such theories were disproved a century ago." On Sherwood Anderson: "the most astonishing circumstance connected with him is the fact that he has been taken seriously." On Sinclair Lewis: "notwithstanding the popular acclaim of 'Main Street' and 'Babbitt' Lewis' first important novel was 'Arrowsmith.'" As for the whole school of modern American literature: "anyone who has lived on the continent of Europe will recognize in their conception of the relations of the sexes a point of view which is not American." Who, then, does Dr. Quinn admire? Who, to his mind, are the supreme artists among the living? Why, Edith Wharton and Anne Douglas Sedgwick, of course.

One thing remains to be said: even the academy, fortunately, is changing. In every college there is at least one younger man who is sympathetically aware of the things that make up life outside the campus. The textbooks of the next decade will be different.

BERNARD SMITH.

Compass—True Left

New Writing: Volumes I and II, edited by John Lehmann. London: John Lane, The Bodley Head. 255 pages. 6 shillings.

THE FIRST two issues of New Writing—a magazine in book form, to be published twice a year—are so true to their title that a reviewer is forced to take an anxious look at his critical vocabulary, conditioned by more than a decade of literary *tours de force*. In comparison with the material in these volumes the most natural, or "naturalistic," writing of the past few years appears strained and incomplete, an overcorrection of a previous overemphasis. Even from left-wing writers we have been getting for the most part, particularly in this country, one more swing away from, and denial of, those who had been the new guard before them: as with Dada or Superrealism, it was almost impossible to see the time for the pendulum. First art was useless, and suddenly had no existence aside from its use. It was, we were told, an instrument in the class struggle, and often no real distinction was made between that instrument and, say, a machine gun. It was inevitable that a good deal of writing should pop automatically into the category of art, following the change of heart or suspected publicity value of its creator.

With the appearance of New Writing it is safe to say that this infancy of left-wing writing, and the stresses and strains that go with any infant movement, have been outgrown. There is in these books almost none of that daubing of sociological moral over half-baked emotional reactions which has made so many artistic heroes of the Left. There is little of the kind of writing that consists in an accumulation of events, depending for its effect entirely on the brute impact of fact—the kind of writing that has passed for a true understanding of contemporary life. There is hardly even a question, any longer, of whether subject matter or form is more important. What we find here—not in all cases, of course, but as a direction—is the fusion of the writer, through symbol, with the world outside. This writing is "Left," not simply in opposition to some previous manifesto, or because the artist has been told to make a hand grenade of his work, but rather because the need for social change is an integral part of the world that he perceives.

Of the pieces that illustrate this tendency, the clearest and most brilliant is Christopher Isherwood's story, "The Nowaks" in Vol. I, one of the finest pieces of prose to have been written for some time, and one of the few intelligent works of fiction in which a writer has dared to be honest without making a fetish of his revelations. It is the portrayal of a German family in the period before Hitler's coming to power, people so shot through with social disease that their gayest moments—telling stories at the dinner table or playing with a mechanical mouse on Christmas Eve—have taken on a quality of nightmare and perversion. But there is no insistence on this undertow. The story progresses easily, and slowly—through dreams, satire and apparently artless observations—builds up an account of its subject so precise as to need no general interpretation. It is a story that should be read by everyone interested in the direction of literature, now that it is no longer possible to present as a sole good either staying in the woods or coming out of them.

Ralph Bates is more soothing—if only because his work can give the appearance of being lyrical in inspiration—and equally sure of his medium and of himself. Equally shameless, if you like, since for every exaggeration in recent literature there has been a corresponding shame. "The Launch," a story of Spanish fishermen, is an example of hardness, corresponding to a core of necessity at the center of the lives described, combined with a use of music in words, and music in the interrelations of themes. Aside from these, the most arresting work in the first volume is Edward Upward's story, expressing a type of awareness that he has dealt with in his novels and that might be called belief by vision. In this case it is a steam roller, as symbol for external power, that saves a man from himself and from insanity.

The second volume is distinguished chiefly by two fables by W. H. Auden and Jean Cassou. There are also excellent contributions by Ignazio Silone, George Orwell, Morton Freedgood and others whose names will carry meaning and influence within the next ten years. In both volumes there is little work that is not characterized by vigor, honesty and a real desire to express the meaning of our time. This is a publication that can only be read with gratitude and admiration, and perhaps regret that it should stand alone as representative of what is, in the truest sense, new writing.

ELEANOR CLARK.

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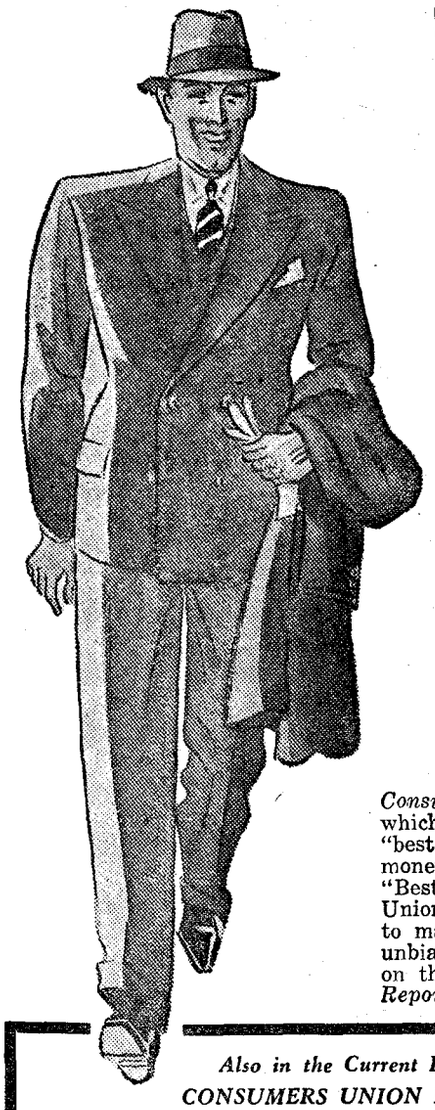

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Also in the Current Issue of
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COLD REMEDIES

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MAY—Toilet Soaps, Grade A versus Grade B Milk, Breakfast Cereals

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JULY—Refrigerators, Bathing Suits, Used Cars, Motor Oils

AUG.—Oil Burners and Stokers, Black List of Drugs and Cosmetics, White Bread, Meat, Hosiery

SEPT.—Tires, Whiskies, Women's Coats, Shoes

OCT.—Men's Shirts, Gins, Brandies and Cordials, Electric Razors, Dentifrices, Anti-freeze Solutions

NOV.—1937 Autos, Radios, Toasters, Wines, Children's Shoes, Winter Oils

DEC.—Vacuum Cleaners, Fountain Pens, Electric Irons, Blankets, Nose Drops

JAN.—Men's Suits, Children's Undergarments, Cold Remedies, Flour, Shaving Creams

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The Anti-Semitic Enigma

Anti-Semitism Historically and Critically Examined, by Hugo Valentin. New York: The Viking Press. 324 pages. $3.

Anti-Semitism Yesterday and Tomorrow, by Rabbi Lee J. Levinger. New York: The Macmillan Company. 350 pages. $2.50.

Jews in America, by the Editors of Fortune Magazine. New York: Random House. 104 pages. $1.

THE PROBLEM of anti-Semitism is as inscrutable and almost as old as the Sphinx, and many students have concluded that the answer to it must be found in history—that the solution will somehow arise out of diligent compilation of all the supposedly known facts. But this hypothesis is unfortunately not sound (though the task is surely the historian's), and writings that are based on it prove disappointing. Take the most recent: Hugo Valentin's "Anti-Semitism Historically and Critically Examined." It begins with some excellently condensed chapters on anti-Semitism in different periods, smoothly written, industriously excerpted from authorities, not shedding a single ray of new light. There never is an analysis of forces and circumstances that would really clarify a single anti-Semitic outbreak; essentials therefore remain hazy and the whole treatment is conventional.

Rabbi Levinger ("Anti-Semitism Yesterday and Tomorrow") is still more interested in refuting charges and defending his people, and still less in the anti-Semitic problem. The first part of his book is historical (of this the chapter on the Jews in America is far and away the most valuable); the second is systematic—promising an analysis of religious causes, economic aspects and so on. But the promise is not kept. Apologetics for the attacked take its place. In the end there is some discussion of theories of anti-Semitism built on Marxian and Freudian premises—but that is merely thrown in and comes too late. Mr. Valentin's book, it might have been mentioned, contains a similar chapter: a non-committal digest of various current theories with no visible effect on the rest of his book.

The editors of Fortune have been ridiculed for their modest choice of topic. It must, of course, seem rather Milquetoasty that some people still write about things they know something about. But anti-Semitism is rising in the United States with its stock argument: that the Jews are possessing themselves of the wealth of the country. And the editors of Fortune, by profession connoisseurs of the American capital structure, asked themselves if the charge could be substantiated. They found some justification in the clothing and moving-picture fields, but they also found strong Jewish under-representation or practical exclusion in many more important branches.

The conclusion they derived from their inquiry—that the Jews were in 1936 still far from having won a share of the national income corresponding to their percentage of the population—will be of permanent value. Just as valuable is their distinction between "the latent prejudice which is a common phenomenon in history" and what they call an "affirmative racial phobia." That these two forms of anti-Semitism have very little to do with each other was known to older observers like Mommsen, who compared the sudden outbreak of his day with a cholera epidemic. It has been overlooked by Dubnow, and therefore by all latter-day writers who build on his research.

Once the distinction is fully realized it becomes clear that modern anti-Semitism (the aggressive and only true pathological form) is far from being a continuous or even a frequent phenomenon; that it is essentially a German product; and that in 1880, when the word "anti-Semitism" was coined, something really new had come into the world.

Marvin Lowenthal, whose "Jews in Germany" is a masterpiece (though not of historical interpretation), says of these early anti-Semites that they nourished a "romantic dream they called true socialism, meaning a self-intoxication with socialist phrases and otherwise leaving everything else as it is." But this is really slurring over essentials. The social program of the first political leader of Austrian anti-Semitism was the work of two of the most brilliant minds of the old monarchy, two Jews, Heinrich Friedjung and Victor Adler, the latter being the founder and venerated leader of Austrian Social Democracy. There were outstanding men, like Engelbert Pernerstorfer, who vacillated for a long time between the two movements. And in 1899, when Prince Alois Lichtenstein set forth the social program of the main anti-Semitic group, Adler himself wrote in a Berlin paper: "a very effective socialistic speech! . . . One has to be a Prince Lichtenstein to get away with such sayings."

The social radicalism of the anti-Semitic movement cannot be dismissed with a shrug of the shoulders. On the contrary, it was originally more genuine with them than their anti-Semitism. It has so far been completely overlooked that Stöcker and Schönerer, that is to say the two founders of the movement in Berlin and Vienna, were both proclaiming considerably developed social programs before they coöpted anti-Jewish planks.

This was a radicalism of very little theoretical insight, but it was none the less determined to go after the scalp of the liberal economic system. It was the radicalism of the older classes of society, shocked into action by the stock-market excesses of railroad barons, by the crash of 1873, by the first ravages of mass production and the threat of the labor movement. And this movement took to Jew-baiting not so much because of "latent prejudice" as because of the fact that the Jews in Germany were popularly identified with modern capitalism and its deleterious cultural influences. (Witness the youthful anti-Semitism of Karl Marx: "The money draft [*Wechsel*] is the real god of the Jews. . . . What is needed is the emancipation of society from Jewishness.")

Anti-Semitism was forced upon the leaders of the crusade by their followers because the original program was too sober and realistic to afford emotional release. These leaders were essentially new men in politics eagerly seeking to win a hold on the newly enfranchised, hitherto unrepresented classes. The accidental discovery of anti-Semitism—a symbol eliciting an undreamed-of emotional response and borrowing intensity from the strength of existing prejudice—proved invaluable to them in their electoral campaigns.

Now we can perhaps try to define a little more closely the phenomenon of which we are speaking. There were at the end of the nineteenth century certain classes of society whose economic existence and cultural heritage were threatened with extinction. At just this time they were given their first political influence. Lacking all organization, political experience or insight into their own interests, they required a new type of *Führer,* a cruder technique of demagogy, a stronger emotional appeal. (Their more realistically conceived program called for state regimentation, social security, war without stint against liberalism and all its doings.) In other words, the term "anti-Semitism" was invented about 1880 to describe the political movement that we now call fascism.

PETER OLDEN.

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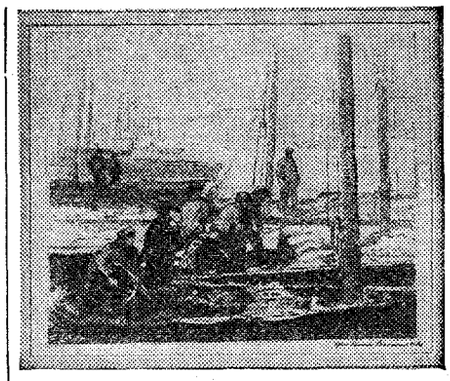

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Books in Brief

Saint Joan of Arc, by Virginia Sackville-West. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company. 410 pages. $3.

MISS SACKVILLE-WEST is hampered by conflicting tendencies in her portrayal of Joan which leave an effect of confusion. French history of the period, she says, is of no special interest now, but Joan is of perennial interest. She has therefore condensed and clarified the historic background, giving merely enough to indicate Joan's relation to her time, politically, socially and psychologically, and keep her always in the foreground. Her wish to make a realistic portrait is almost successful. Her heroine is a simple peasant girl yet different from most peasants in being a great mystic, and different from most mystics in the importance of the events with which she is associated, her predominant part in them, the dramatic contrasts and tragic pathos of her life and end, and the passionate devotion and pity she arouses. But the mystery of Joan, the author believes, is not capable of scientific solution or even of psychological analysis. How explain her influence over the men she persuaded to take her, one of the humblest subjects of France, on a message from God to the Dauphin, the impression she made at the court, her military leadership, her victories despite tactical blunders, her confidence in herself? The author's prostration before the mystery of the voices which she now almost accepts as superhuman and now does not, her constant debates with herself on that subject without achieving any position but that of wonder and admiration are disturbing. Apart from this the story is told with beauty and clarity. Striving to isolate her heroine from what is factitious, to lift her out of the mists of legend, she has given us a real and human person who yet moves among mysteries which neither she nor anyone else can understand. C. G. S.

Canary, by Gustav Eckstein. New York: Harper and Brothers. 281 pages. $2.50.

In 1925 Dr. Eckstein brought home the first canary and gave it the run (or the fly, rather) of his laboratory at the University of Cincinnati. Generation followed canary generation, with annual newcomers from the outside adding vigorous branches to the family tree. One eye to his microscope, the other to his brood, Dr. Eckstein saw first flights, love affairs, nestings, accidents and sometimes deaths. Each canary had its own peculiar problems and the doctor was in on them all. Telling their stories in "Canary," he personalizes them without any trace of the sentimentality that usually bogs down writing of this sort. His book is the work of a professional mind at play on a favorite hobby: written in human rather than in scientific terms. It will prove good reading not only for those already fond of canaries but for anyone who, sitting comfortably before a fire, enjoys looking into a world unaffected by the heavy hand of Thou Shalt Not. D. J.

Root, Hog and Die, by George Dixon Snell. Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers. $2.50.

"Root, Hog and Die" chronicles the rise and fall of Mormonism from its birth in the depression-ridden 1830's to its prosperous decadence at the end of the century. Jim Brent, the chief character, is a farm boy in upstate New York. Fired with the vision of a promised paradise where none shall be rich and none poor, he survives the years of persecution and the killing journey to the shores of Salt Lake. There he prospers in possessions, in wives and in church politics, finally rising to ownership of enterprises in which his fellow "Saints" toil for wages no whit saintlier than they would have earned working for "gentiles" across the Colorado line. As Brent lies dying, his paradise crumbles rapidly under the pressure of chambers of commerce above and labor unions below. Mr. Snell sees this story through the eyes of three generations of Brents, with an impartiality that makes the history ring true but deprives the novel of the human drama hidden beneath its historical aspect. D. J.

British Authors of the Nineteenth Century, edited by Stanley J. Kunitz and Howard Haycraft. New York: The H. W. Wilson Company. 693 pages. $5.

Students of English literature who have had to get their information about authors' lives from the usual encyclopedias of biography with their bone-dry listings of dates and titles will be grateful for the book Messrs. Kunitz and Haycraft have edited. Not that dates and titles are omitted from this large volume—they are compactly listed at the end of each biography—but the salient facts about each of these thousand and more writers are so chosen and pointed that the men and women presented emerge as personalities, products of their ancestry, impressed by their times and leaving their own impress on those times in turn. Messrs. Kunitz and Haycraft, and their writers, have assumed that students of literature, in schools, clubs, at home or wherever, should be treated as adults, and they have not skipped lively scandalous details, if any—although they have not gone out of their way to stress them. Reproductions of portraits accompany 350 of the sketches, in some cases no recommendation of the writer in question, but probably doing no injustice to the subject. In general the editors have chosen only authors of the last hundred years—roughly from 1800 to the 1900's; the few earlier writers included have been selected for reasons of literary association or historic connection; and preference has been given to writers of literary rather than informative material. Not only are the characterizations more than ordinarily vivid; the literary quality of the various sketches is well above the average to be found in such collections; the book should be widely used. B. E. B.

Contributors

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The initials signed to the brief reviews are those of Clara Gruening Stillman, Dan James and Beatrice E. Bettinger.

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